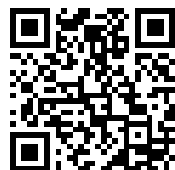

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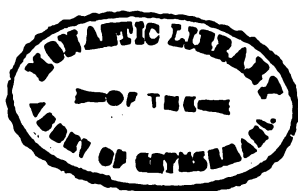
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TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

TO

Bible History

A Practical Commentary upon the principal events of the
Old and New Testaments, with directions for
their application in the religious and
moral training of children



BY THE REV. A. URBAN



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NEW YORK

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AN EXPLANATION OF BIBLE HISTORY, HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

FIRST PERIOD.

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM (ABOUT 4000 TO 2100 B. C.)

I.—CREATION OF THE WORLD.

A. *Preparation*.—Many thousand years ago there was no earth, no sun, no moon, no star, no animal; not even man existed. God alone reigned supreme then as always. We shall now see how God created the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the animals upon the earth, the birds in the air, the fish in the sea, and last—the most perfect of creatures—man.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (1) The Creation of the World. (2) The Institution of the Sabbath.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "In the beginning"—that is to say, before the world was formed, the time when nothing existed but God alone—"God created"—that is, by His divine power He called forth out of nothing—"heaven and earth"—heaven, the invisible world wherein the angels dwell; the earth, the visible world, the temporary abiding-place of man. This earth as first called forth was not beautiful as now, but a great waste of waters, a place desolate, empty, void—without animal or plant—it had not yet been prepared for man. Over the wide expanse of desolate waters, whose great depths covered vast precipices, the Spirit of God moved, that all might be brought from chaos to order and made into a habitable earth for the being man He was later to create.

"And God said: Be light made"—"*Light*," full, complete, independent light.

"And God said: Let there be a firmament"—"*Firmament*," that is, the atmosphere which surrounds the earth and which we generally call the heavens. It is that space which extends from the earth to the fixed stars. "The waters were divided from the waters;" that is, one portion of them became as vapor, and was elevated above the firmament in the form of clouds: these God called the waters above. The other portion He called the waters below the firmament; that is, the waters which were left upon the earth; this water He called the sea, and gathered it into the place He had prepared for it—the basin of the sea which surrounds the dry land.

Next, God made "the dry land to appear," to which He gave the name of earth, which means sterile. He covered it with grass, herbs, etc., in one word

plants, which within themselves contained seeds in order that they might propagate and multiply their species throughout the ages to come.

"*Lights:*" God created the heavenly bodies, the lights of the heavens—the sun, from which the earth receives the light and heat necessary to life, and upon which the separation of day and night depends; furthermore, the moon and the stars. God next created the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, animals of all kinds upon the earth, insects and reptiles. Last, God created man as the crowning of all creation. All that God made was very good—that is, beautiful, well arranged—and man was uncorrupted, free from sin.

(b) God rested on the seventh day—that is, He ceased to work, to create. He blessed this day and called it holy—that is, He made of the day upon which He rested a holy day, and this day should bring a blessing upon all who thereafter kept it holy, a blessing in time and in eternity.

D. *Commentary.*—(1) *God is the Creator of the World.* The world—heaven and earth are created by God, brought forth from nothing. Why do we call God "the creator of heaven and earth"? The attributes of God. (a) God is eternal. "In the beginning God created." God was here before the beginning of time. He had no beginning and will have no end. What is meant, then, by the eternity of God?¹ (b) God is all-powerful. Man in order to form any object must needs have materials—tools. God needs but to say the word. God had but to will that it be, and the heavens and the earth and all that they contain were created; therefore, God is all-powerful. What do you mean by saying God is all-powerful?²

(2) *The Sabbath.* On the seventh day God rested. He blessed this day and called it holy. God distinguished this day then from all other days. He blessed, sanctified, made of it a holy day. After six days of work man also must rest from his labors on the seventh day, and this day he must keep holy. Later God gave unto man a particular command concerning this day. What is the third commandment?³

E. *Moral Application.*—To-day you have heard how infinitely great and powerful God is. Therefore we should entertain the greatest respect and love for God; especially in our thoughts of Him, in our speech with Him. When do we speak with God? Every time, then, that you pray be not heedless, but mindful of God's presence and pray with fervor, love, devotion. Practise now what you have heard and be attentive to your prayers after the instruction: "Ask, and it shall be given you." Has Christ not said, "Let the little ones come unto me"? Ask then fervently, lovingly, and all will be granted unto you.

NOTE.—The numbers given in the footnotes refer to corresponding questions in the BALTIMORE CATECHISM. (1) 14. (2) 19. (3) 353.

II.—CREATION AND FALL OF THE ANGELS.

A. *Preparation*.—God created heaven and earth. In creating heaven He also created those who were to dwell therein—the holy angels. Of the angels I shall speak to you to-day.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) Creation of the Angels. (b) Fall and punishment of the bad angels and reward of the good angels.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) *Creature*: that which has been created, that which exists—plants, animals, people are creatures or beings, and as we can see them with our bodily eyes, they are visible beings or creatures. The angels are also creatures, but as we can not see them with our bodily eyes, they are invisible beings or creatures—spirits. God created innumerable angels, countless angels—that is, more than could be numbered—myriads of angels. He endowed them with superior gifts to make them superior to man. These gifts are beauty, strength, holiness. Therefore, when God created them, they were good. (b) Though created in a state of sanctity they were not impeccable, and many of them fell through pride. These rebelled against God: a revolt ensued. Michael was one of the most beautiful and the highest of the angels. He remained at the head of the good angels who were faithful to God, and these were rewarded by being admitted to God's presence to remain forever happy. The bad angels were cast forever from His sight.

D. *Commentary*.—(1.) *The Lesson of the Angels*. (a) The state of the angels. The angels are spiritual creatures. They do not, like man, consist of body and spirit, but are pure spirits. (b) The name angel means messenger. The first duty of the good angels is to adore and praise God. They also execute His orders with regard to man. His important messages have been brought to earth by these messengers. Owing to the rapidity with which the angels carry out God's commands they are always pictured as possessing wings. (c) Their relations to man. As man is also destined by God to be one day with Him in heaven, the angels have a particular love for man as a future sharer of their eternal happiness. Especially is this true concerning the guardian angels. God has given unto each one of us from the first moment of our existence an angel guardian to pray for us, to encourage us to good, and to protect us from harm in soul and body. How are the good angels disposed toward us? What do we owe to our guardian angels? 2. *Pride*. The angels were to give honor to God, as the highest Lord of heaven and earth, by their obedience. The bad angels rebelled against this decree, they wished to be higher than God, and in their pride they no longer wished to honor Him by the obedience they owed to Him. How does man sin through pride?

(3) *The Malice of deadly sin.* God, who metes out reward and punishment according to justice, cast the bad angels, for having committed one sin, the sin of pride, into hell for all eternity. Man can realize, therefrom, what a dreadful evil sin is in the sight of God. In what does the malice of mortal sin consist?

E. *Moral Application.*—The intense hatred God has for sin can be seen by the dreadful punishment of the bad angels. To be forever shut out from God's presence and cast into the dread torments of hell is the greatest misfortune which could possibly overtake us. Therefore, my dear children, fly every temptation, repulse every sin, that you may never incur the wrath of God and have the awful fate of the bad angels.

III.—CREATION OF MAN. PARADISE.

A. *Preparation.*—On the sixth day God created man. To-day I shall tell you how God created man and where He placed him.

B. *Narration.*—Points: (a) Creation of the First Man. (b) Paradise. (c) Creation of Eve.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) God said: "Let us make man to our image and likeness"—that is, after the likeness of God; man, then, was to be an image of God; he was to resemble God. "And let him have dominion." Therefore, man is the highest and most perfect creature on earth, the lord of the earth, the crown of all creation. "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The soul, then, is the breath of God, something Godlike.

(b) Paradise or Eden, a garden of delight, probably in the neighborhood of the present Armenia. "And the Lord God brought forth of the ground all manner of trees, fair to behold and pleasant to eat of: the tree of life also in the midst of paradise: and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." "The tree of life"—so called because its fruit had received from God the power to give health, beauty, and youth to man. "The tree of knowledge of good and evil"—so called because those who ate of its fruits were to know within themselves the difference between good and evil. "And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it." He was not to dress it in order to obtain from it the necessary nourishment, but simply for his own delight. "And he commanded him, saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death"—that is, he and his descendants were to die; that is, incur death; whereas, if he obeyed God's command, he and his descendants were never to know death.

(c) "And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone." As a being endowed with understanding, he could not alone entertain him-

self with creatures not endowed with reason, nor enjoy the gifts of God. In order that Adam might recognize his own need of a help like unto himself, God brought before him all the animals He had made. "But for Adam there was not found a helper like himself. Then the Lord cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and he took one of his ribs and made it into a woman, and brought her to Adam." Adam was indeed delighted to find a being like unto himself, and he said: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." "And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth;" that is, people the earth with their descendants, their children, and their children's children. And God gave them sanctifying grace.

D. *Commentary.*—(1) *The Doctrine of Man.* (a) Nature and existence of the same. God created the body of man from the slime of the earth and breathed into this dead body a living soul, an immortal soul. How did God create Adam, the first man? (b) The image of God in man. This is a twofold likeness. The natural and the supernatural gifts in which he resembles God. The natural gifts consist in these, that the human soul is immortal and endowed with understanding and free will, gifts which belong to the nature, the being of man. The supernatural gifts consisted in these, that the first man possessed sanctifying grace, that he was endowed with great knowledge, and was free from all inclination to evil; that he was not subject to hardships, sufferings, or death. These were supernatural gifts, because they were above, beyond nature—the nature of man could not assume them, could not claim them. They were supernatural. How was the first man the image of God? In what do the natural gifts consist? In what, the supernatural?

(2) *Attributes of God.* God's infinite love and goodness. God loved Adam and Eve with a great love, and showered His favors upon them. Therefore we speak of the infinite goodness of God. What do you mean by saying God is good?

(3) *The Blessed Trinity.* By the words, "Let us," etc., it is concluded that there are several Persons in One God. How many divine Persons are there in one God?

E. *Moral Application.* We have seen how God loved our first parents and bestowed His numberless blessings upon them. Thus God loves all mankind, including us all. Think of the manifold blessings God, out of the abundance of His love, has already bestowed upon you. (Examples.) Therefore you must love God, who has so loved you, with your whole hearts, and try in every way to please Him. This you can do in all your actions by consecrating

them to Him with the thought: All for the love and greater glory of God. The instruction closes with a prayer to the honor of God.

IV.—THE FALL OF MAN. THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOUR.

A. *Preparation*.—Although the command God gave to our first parents was so easy of fulfilment, they did not keep it. In to-day's instruction I shall tell you how Adam and Eve fell into sin, how God punished them, and how He promised them a Saviour.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) Fall of our First Parents. (b) Their bad conscience. (c) Punishment pronounced upon the serpent and the promise of a Redeemer. (d) Punishment pronounced upon Adam and Eve. (e) Their expulsion from paradise.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) The devil grudged man his happiness because he himself was unhappy; he was moved by hatred and envy to harm man; he took the shape of a serpent to deceive the woman Eve. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God had made"—"Subtle," that is, cunning, sly, deceitful. "And the serpent (that is, the devil, who spoke through the serpent) said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?" The devil cunningly hides his true aspect; therefore, he does not ask Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree against the express command of God. Only after having roused in Eve a doubt as to God's veracity, His justice, does he suggest to her to disobey Him. Once having listened to the temptation, Eve was easily persuaded to believe the devil rather than God. "The serpent said to the woman: No; you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" meaning their spiritual eyes would be opened and that they would have a higher knowledge than they had before possessed.

"You shall be as gods." In order to move the still hesitating Eve to commit sin, the devil made use of a lie. Through it Eve was tempted by pride, which, as in the case of the angels, brought about her fall.

(b) "And the eyes of them both were opened;" that is, they realized that the devil, in the guise of a serpent, had shamefully deceived them. "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God." They were afraid before God. "And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: Where art thou?" Where (into what sad condition) have you fallen? "And Adam answered: I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." "Naked" not only in body, but in soul, which had been deprived of its beautiful robe of innocence. "The Lord said: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" This question was put to Adam by the all-knowing God, to move him to a repentant acknowledgment of his guilt.

(c) "And Adam said: The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord said to the woman:

Why hast thou done this? And she answered: The serpent deceived me"—that is, lied to me—"and I did eat. And the Lord said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing"—meaning, because thou hast made thyself a tool of the devil: the first part of the punishment—"thou are cursed among all cattle and beasts of the earth; upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life"—applied to the serpent; the second part—"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel"—applied to the devil, who had thought that man, having been tempted to fall, would in the future cleave to him. Instead of this, God made known to him that enmity would be between him and mankind, and that one of the woman's seed (that is, one of the descendants), Mary, should crush his power. And he would lay his snares for her in vain. By giving birth to the Saviour of the world Mary conquered the devil.

(d) "To the woman also God said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." Thus by her sin Eve brought unto mankind sorrow, misfortune, and affliction of all kinds; she was to be under her husband's power, that is, she was to obey him. Then God gave sentence, punishment to Adam, and through him to all his descendants. God said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife"—that is, because thou hast let thyself be tempted by her to commit this sin—"cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Namely, owing to the curse placed upon her by Adam's sin, the earth was, for the future, only to bring forth, through man's toil and hard labor, such fruits for his necessary sustenance that until then she had freely yielded without his aid. "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return," that is, from the earth the body of man was formed, and into earth it was again to return. This was the sentence of death that the sin of Adam and Eve brought upon mankind.

(e) "And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and clothed them"—these were the skins of animals—in order to protect them from the rain, the cold, and all the changes of the weather they were henceforth to encounter. "And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure to till the earth, from which he was taken." Thus Adam and Eve were cast out forever into the world, which, through them, had the curse of God upon it. And God "placed before the paradise of pleasure cherubims and a flaming sword." God thus drove them out with a flaming sword, that they and their descendants might never venture to return.

D. *Commentary.*—(1) *The Lesson of Sin and its Consequences.* God gave to the man and woman in paradise a command. Tempted by the serpent (the devil), but not forced by him (that is, with their free will) they broke (that is, disobeyed) this command, and thereby sinned. The first sin was thus committed by man. What, then, is sin? To Eve first came a bad thought, a doubt; she formed her doubt into

words, then followed the evil desire for the forbidden fruit, and lastly she took and ate of the same. In what manner, then, did Eve sin? In how many ways can man sin? Are all sins equal? Eve committed a grievous sin. As God gave only one command to man in paradise, this command must have been one of great importance. Eve wilfully disobeyed an important command of God, and thereby committed a mortal sin (a deadly sin). When does one commit a mortal sin? The consequence of sin: 1. To the body: (a) Loss of paradise; (b) labor by the sweat of the brow for daily bread; (c) sickness and ills of the body; (d) death. 2. To the soul: (a) Loss of sanctifying grace (the supernatural image of God); (b) concupiscence (inclination to evil). Sin, therefore, is the greatest of all evils. (2) *Original Sin*. These sad consequences of sin also passed upon all the descendants of Adam except one. Had Adam and Eve not lost sanctifying grace, then every one born into the world would have been holy and free from stain; that is, they would have inherited sanctifying grace from Adam and Eve. But the first parents lost this grace and soiled their souls by sin. All their descendants inherited this stain from them. Therefore all are born into the world with this sin upon them. This sin is called original sin. What do we call this sin in which we are all born? 3. *The first prophecy concerning the Redeemer*. God destined man to be with Him in heaven. Through the sin of our first parents this became impossible. But God did not wish His decree to remain forever unfulfilled; and as man had not, like the bad angels, sinned from within himself, but through temptation, God had mercy upon him and promised him a Redeemer (from sin) in these words: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed." (4) *Adam and Christ*. Adam is our first father in a natural, a material sense; Christ is our first Father in a supernatural, a spiritual sense. Adam brought death, Christ life, to the world. Adam was disobedient, Christ obedient unto death on the cross.

E. *Moral Application*.—Adam and Eve hid themselves in the consciousness of their guilt, through fear of the Lord, amidst the trees of paradise. Sin had taken from them peace of heart and an easy conscience. So it is to-day. If you wish to possess peace of heart and mind, an easy conscience, content and cheerfulness of spirit, keep God in mind every day of your lives, and watch that you fall not into sin.

V.—CAIN AND ABEL.

A. *Preparation*.—Sin and its fatal consequences have passed from Adam upon all his descendants. This showed itself in the wicked Cain, one of the sons of Adam, who slew his brother Abel. About this I shall now tell you.

B. *Narration*. Points: (a) The sacrifice of Cain and Abel. (b) God's fruitless admonition to Cain. The slaying of his brother. (c) Sentence upon Cain. (d) Cain's despair.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Cain was the first born, or oldest, son of Adam. Abel, the second son, was righteous (good, upright). They both offered sacrifice to the Lord in order to show Him honor, to offer prayers to Him. "And it came to pass after many days that Cain offered, of the fruits of the earth, gifts to the Lord. Abel also offered of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat;" firstlings, that is, the first choice, the best. "And the Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offerings"—that is, showed His acceptance of his sacrifice as coming from a heart full of devotion—"but to Cain and his offerings he had no respect"—that is, God made known His dissatisfaction in Cain—"and Cain was exceedingly angry, and his countenance fell." (b) "And the Lord said to him: Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door?"—that is, sin will soon overtake thee—"But the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it"—that is, master the evil desire, listen not to temptation. Cain did not listen to the Lord; he did not obey Him; he yielded to temptation and slew his brother Abel. (c) "And the Lord said to Cain: Where is thy brother Abel?" as He had said to Adam, "Where art thou?" "And Cain answered: I know not: am I my brother's keeper?"—"Keeper," one who must follow in his footsteps in order to keep him, to protect him. "And the Lord said to him: What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth." Abel's blood called to the Lord for vengeance. "This infamous act demands that my justice overtake thee." "Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand. When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth"—that is, without home, without rest, without peace. (d) "And Cain said to the Lord: My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon"—he despaired of God's pardon. "Every one, therefore, that findeth me shall kill me. And the Lord said to him: No, it shall not be so: but whosoever shall kill Cain, shall be punished sevenfold"—that is, receive a punishment seven times more severe than that of Cain. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him"—a mark by which one might know those who had God's punishment upon them.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Attributes of God*. (a) *His Omniscience*. Although there was no witness to give testimony against Cain for the crime he had committed, though this foul deed had been carried out in the greatest secrecy, yet God knew all about it. What do we call that attribute of God by which He knows all things, even the most hidden, the most secret? What do you mean by saying God is *omniscient*? (b) *His Infinite Holiness*. The infamous act of Cain so greatly displeased God because He hates and detests all that is evil. What do you mean by saying God is holy? (c) *His Infinite Justice*. God promises to reward Cain if he would do good, and punishes him for his crime. What do we call that attribute of God by which he rewards the good and punishes the wicked? What do you mean by saying God is just? 2. *Cain's sins*. Cain envied his brother because God showed His acceptance of his sacrifice. Among what sins is envy classed? Which are the seven capital or deadly sins? Show what other sins resulted from Cain's envy: Hatred, anger, lying, deceit, and lastly, wilful murder. 3. *The sins that cry to heaven for vengeance*. The blood of the innocent Abel cried to heaven for vengeance upon his slayer. Wilful murder, then, is one of the sins that cries to heaven for vengeance. Which are the other three sins that cry to heaven for vengeance? 4. *Abel a figure or type of Christ*. Abel offers a sacrifice which is agreeable to God. Christ offers a sacrifice which is infinitely more agreeable to God. Abel was a shepherd. Christ is the Good Shepherd. The innocent Abel is put to death by Cain, his brother. Our Saviour—innocence itself—is put to death by the Jews, His brethren. The blood of Abel cries to heaven for vengeance; the blood of Christ cries for mercy in our behalf. Cain, the murderer of Abel, is condemned to wander a vagabond on the face of the earth; the Jews, the murderers of Our Saviour, are condemned to wander over the face of the earth without priest, without king, without sacrifice.

E. *Moral Application*.—God knew Cain's innermost thoughts and saw his infamous act, although committed in the utmost secret. Our Lord also knows our most secret thoughts, words, and deeds. Therefore beware of thinking wrong thoughts or committing evil deeds. And in temptation remember this little proverb:

Whate'er my thought, or act I do,
My heavenly Father knows it too.

(1) 18. (2) 59. (3) Sodomy, oppression of the poor, of orphans and widows, defrauding laborers of their just wages. (For explanation see Rev. A. Urban's "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism.")

VI.—THE PROPAGATION AND CORRUPTION OF MANKIND.

A. *Preparation*.—We have already seen how the sin of Adam and its dread consequences passed upon Cain; also the other descendants of Adam soon became corrupt and godless. We shall treat of this to-day.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) Increase of mankind. (b) Corruption of mankind.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) And God gave to Adam “another seed, for Abel, whom Cain slew”—that is, a son who was pious and upright like Abel. This was according to God’s promise in paradise, that through the seed of Eve should come a future Saviour. Through this son Seth, after many generations, was born Henoch. Man now turned away from God, that is, became wicked; and mankind was divided into two classes: “The sons of God and the children of men:” the former, the descendants of Seth and Enos, so called through their religion and piety, and the latter, from the race of Cain, so called through their ungodliness, their wickedness. And Henoch “walked with God” (Gen. v. 24)—that is, bore God in mind, and was remarked for his piety. He never ceased to exhort the children of men to repent and be converted. (b) “And God said: My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh, and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years” (Gen. vi. 3)—that is, God gave to the children of men a term of one hundred and twenty years, for their repentance and conversion, before He would send the deluge to destroy them.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Attributes of God*. (a) *God’s Infinite Mercy*. God did not immediately punish the wicked children of men, but gave them one hundred and twenty years in which they might repent of their sins. During this period God never ceased to have them exhorted to repentance and conversion. Therefore He showed His mercy to them. What do you mean by saying God is merciful? (b) *His Infinite Justice*. After this respite of one hundred and twenty years, if the children of men had not returned to God He would punish them. Again we see the justice of God. What do you mean by saying God is just? 2. *God’s wise precautions to preserve the true religion*. In order that the true religion might be preserved among men God continually brought forth among them some remarkable for their piety and virtue, but they by word and example might teach the sinful and make known to them the prophecies and promises of God. God allotted unto them a

long period of years (a long life). (Adam 930 years, Lamach 770 years, Noe 950 years), so that the prophecies might be carried down by word of mouth, through but few generations, to Moses, by whom they were written. Thus coming orally from so few mouths there was no danger of the divine prophecies being changed.

E. *Moral Application*.—The devil tempted the first man and woman. Later man tempted one the other, the bad tempting the good. So it is to-day. Watch that you fall not into temptation. Shun bad companions. You can not at the same time be a friend of God and a friend of the wicked. "My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them" (Prov. i. 10).

VII.—THE DELUGE (2400 B. C.).

A. *Preparation*.—God threatened mankind with destruction if it would not be converted, that is, if it did not become better. But instead of becoming better, it became much worse, more wicked, more corrupt; therefore, God destroyed mankind by the deluge.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) God's command to Noe to build the ark. (b) The construction of the ark and the sermon of Noe. (c) The flood.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And God, seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, it repented him that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. vi. 5, 6). It repented Him, etc. These expressions are used to declare the enormity of the sins of men, which were so great as to determine God to destroy these, His creatures, whom before He had so much favored. "He said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth" (ver. 7). (b) "But Noe found grace before the Lord" (ver. 8). God had mercy upon him, because he was good and remained faithful to God; and did not allow him to be destroyed with the wicked. The Lord ordered Noe to make the ark, that was a large vessel or boat house, "with lower, middle chambers and third stories" (ver. 16). And God said to Noe, "I will establish my covenant with thee" (ver. 18)—that is, God would save Noe and his family, and they were to show their gratitude to God by remaining faithful to Him. And Noe and his family went into the ark. "And of beasts, clean and unclean, and of fowls and of everything that moveth upon the earth, two and two went in to Noe into the ark, male and female, as the Lord had commanded Noe" (Gen. vii. 8-9). "Clean beasts," those living mainly on plants, especially domestic animals. And Noe preached penance to his fellow-men that they might be converted. (c) "And after the seven days were passed, the waters of the flood overflowed the earth." "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood gates of heaven were opened: And the rain

fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (vers. 10-12). "The fountains of the great deep," that is, all the surface waters of the earth. "The flood gates of heaven," an expression meaning the clouds.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* *God's Infinite Faithfulness.* God promised Noe that He would save him, and we see how God kept His promise. God threatened the wicked with destruction. Did God carry out His threat? Because God fulfils His promises and executes His threats we say He is infinitely faithful. What do you mean by saying God is faithful? 2. *God's wise precautions to preserve the true religion.* The bad example of the wicked would in time have caused the good to turn from God. Thus the true faith and the hope of a Redeemer would have been destroyed. In order to prevent this God destroyed the wicked by the deluge. Noe and his family alone were saved, and through them the true faith and the promise of a Redeemer were preserved among men. 3. *The Ark is an image of the Church.* Everything outside of the ark was destroyed. Outside of the Church there is no salvation (Cyprian). The ark was intended for creatures of every kind; the Church is intended for the people of every nation. But one door was the entrance into the ark. As there is but one baptism, and that the only entrance into the Church. Neither water nor wave could prevail against the ark, which, under the protection of God, safely glided over them. Neither devil nor hell can prevail against the Church, which stands under God's special protection.

E. *Moral Application.*—Noe lived in the midst of godless men, nevertheless he remained good and pious. So you also, though you might see and hear what is wrong, can remain good and pious. God gives you the grace, and you can do all in God, who strengthens you.

VIII.—NOE LEAVES THE ARK AND OFFERS SACRIFICE.

A. *Preparation.*—After all living creatures, outside of the ark, had been destroyed, God caused the waters to be abated that Noe and his family and all the living creatures with him might leave the ark. We shall now relate how Noe left the ark and what he first did on leaving it. "So Noe went out, he and his sons: his wife, and the wives of his sons with him. And all living things, and cattle, and creeping things that creep upon the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark" (Gen. viii. 18, 19).

B. *Narration.*—Points: (a) The abating of the waters. (b) The sending out of the raven and the dove. (c) Noe's thanksgiving and God's covenant with him,

C. *Explanation.*—(a) God allowed the flood to cover the earth for one hundred and fifty days. "And God remembered Noe, and all the living creatures, and all the cattle which were with him in the ark, and brought a wind upon the earth, and the waters were abated" (viii. 1). This does not mean that God had for a time forgotten Noe, but that He now wished to release Noe from the ark. "And the ark rested in the seventh month, the seven and twentieth day of the month, upon the mountains of Armenia" (viii. 4). "The mountains of Armenia," that is, Mount Ararat. (b) "And after that forty days were passed, Noe, opening the window, sent forth a raven: which went forth and did not return till the waters were dried up upon the earth" (viii. 6, 7). The raven did not return into the ark, but went to and fro, sometimes going to the mountains, where it found carcasses to feed on, and other times returning to rest upon the top of the ark. Then Noe sent forth a dove, which immediately returned to the ark, showing that the waters were still upon the earth. After waiting some days, he again sent out the dove, which returned carrying an olive branch, making known to Noe that the waters had greatly receded. After seven days, Noe sent the dove the third time, "which returned not any more unto him" (viii. 12). Thus Noe knew that the face of the earth was dried, and God told him to take all with him and leave the ark. (c) And Noe, on leaving the ark, testified his gratitude to the Lord by offering a sacrifice to Him. "And Noe built an altar unto the Lord: and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar" (viii. 20). "And God blessed Noe and his sons. And he said to them: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. ix. 1). God blessed Noe as He once had blessed Adam and Eve. And God said to Noe: "I will establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall be no more destroyed with the waters of a flood, neither shall there be from henceforth a flood to waste the earth. This is the sign of the covenant which I give between me and you, and to every living soul that is with you, for perpetual generations: I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me and between the earth" (Gen. ix. 11-13).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *God's Goodness and Faithfulness.* Again God's infinite goodness and faithfulness are portrayed, not alone to Noe and his family, but to all the living creatures in the ark which He saved from the universal deluge. God is filled with love for all His creatures. What is meant by the infinite goodness of God? God promised Noe that the whole earth should not again be destroyed by a flood; that is, there would not again be a universal deluge. And God kept His word. Thus we see the faithfulness of God. What do you mean by saying God is faithful? 2. *Noe's trust in and gratitude toward God.* With perfect trust in God Noe built the ark and entered into the same, placing himself and his with entire confidence in the hands of God. On leaving the ark Noe testified his gratitude to the Lord by offering up a sacrifice

to Him. He wished by his first act to render thanks for his wonderful deliverance.

E. Moral Application.—Just as Noe was wonderfully protected and delivered by God from destruction, have been and still are today the good and upright of heart watched over and protected by Him. So thus, my children, see that you remain pious and virtuous, and your heavenly Father will direct everything to your advantage. Show your confidence in God. Trust all to Him and accept all things with gratitude from the hands of God.

IX.—THE SONS OF NOE. NOE'S DEATH.

A. Preparation.—Of the three sons of Noe who entered into the ark with him, and of Noe's death we will now speak. The Scriptures tell us: "And the sons of Noe who came out of the ark, were Sem, Cham, and Japheth, and Cham is the father of Chanaan; these three are the sons of Noe: and from these was all mankind spread over the whole earth" (Gen. ix. 18, 19).

B. Narration.—Points: (a) The sons of Noe. (b) Noe's curse and blessing. (c) His death.

C. Explanation.—(a) From Sem sprang the inhabitants of Asia. The descendants of Cham peopled Africa and those of Japheth peopled Europe. (b) "And Noe, a husbandman, began to till the ground, and planted a vineyard. And drinking of the wine was made drunk, and was uncovered in his tent" (Chap. ix. 20, 21). Noe had not yet built for himself a house, but lived in a tent. By the judgment of the fathers Noe was not guilty of sin in being overcome by wine, because he knew not the strength of it. When Cham, the father of Chanaan, had seen, to wit, that his father's nakedness was uncovered, he told it to his two brethren without. "But Sem and Japheth put a cloak upon their shoulders and, going backward, covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, and they saw not their father's nakedness" (Chap. ix. 22, 23).

D. Commentary.—1. *The lesson of sin.* What is sin? Was Noe's drunkenness a sin? Why not? 2. *Impurity.* The human body should always be covered. God Himself gave clothing to the first man and woman to cover their nakedness: (When?) If one strips of covering the human body, looks at nakedness, etc., not from necessity but from sensuality, then he commits the sin of impurity. Cham not only lacked in respect toward his father, but in looking at his nakedness and speaking of it to his brethren, sinned in thought, look, and word against purity. By which commandment does God

forbid the sin of impurity?" Which commandment did Cham break? When Noe awakened and learned what had happened, he said: "Cursed be Chanaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be the Lord God of Sem, be Chanaan his servant. May God enlarge Japheth and may he dwell in the tents of Sem, and Chanaan be his servant" (ix. 25-27). The holy patriarch then cursed Cham in the person of Chanaan, his son, and his malediction produced its effect; and he blessed Sem and Japheth. "And Noe lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years; and all his days were in the whole nine hundred and fifty years: and he died" (ix. 28, 29). 3. Noe was a figure of our Redeemer. Noe signifies consoler, Jesus signifies Saviour. Noe alone finds grace before God; Christ alone finds grace before his Father. Noe builds an ark, which saves him and his family from the deluge. Our Lord builds His Church to save from eternal death all who are willing to enter it. Noe was chosen to be the father of a new world; Our Saviour was chosen to people the earth with the just and heaven with saints. Noe offered pleasing sacrifice to God. Christ offered Himself, the most pleasing of all sacrifice.

E. *Moral Application*.—The curse of Noe came upon Cham owing to his sin of impurity. The curse of God is upon the impure of heart; shame in this life and eternal damnation in the next. Be modest in every thought, word, look, and act. Remember God sees and knows all, even the most secret thought. Treasure purity as your most precious possession. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

X.—THE TOWER OF BABEL.

A. *Preparation*.—The descendants of Noe were soon a numerous people. Unfortunately, they also fell away from God.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) The Tower of Babel and the separation into nations. (b) Idolatry.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And when they removed from the East, they found a plain in the land of Sennaar and dwelt in it" (Gen. xi. 2). Sennaar, lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The descendants of Noe now undertook to build a city and a tower whose summit should reach the heavens, in order to immortalize their name and secure them against a future deluge. This was an evil purpose, and God did not bless it. God said: "Come ye, therefore, let us go down and there confound their tongue, that they may not understand one another's speech. And so the Lord scattered them from that place into all lands, and they ceased to build the city. And, therefore, the

name thereof was called Babel, because there the language of the whole earth was confounded: and from thence the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of all countries" (Chap. xi. 7-9). Until this time there had been but one language and one people; now there were many languages; and those speaking the same formed into a family. These families removed farther and farther, and by degrees peopled the whole earth. (b) Blinded by their passions, the people soon disowned the true God, and in His place adored creatures: this was the beginning of idolatry.

D. Commentary.—1. *Pride*. The descendants of Noe no longer gave to God the honor due Him in that they no longer obeyed Him; they wished to build the Tower of Babel to immortalize their names. Of what sin were they thus guilty? 2. *Idolatry*. The descendants of Noe turned away from God and gave to creatures the honor due to God alone. By what command are we forbidden to bow down, to serve, or to give to any creature the honor due to God? What is the First Commandment? Giving to any creature the honor due to God alone is called idolatry.

E. Moral Application.—Pride caused the fall of the angels and that of our first parents. The descendants of Noe also went to their destruction through the sin of pride; they withdrew from God because blind and hard of heart, and at last fell into the worship of idols. Beware of pride, shun every thought, every temptation that might lead you into this deadly sin. What have we to be proud of? Keep God ever before your eyes and try to see yourself as He sees you. "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Ecclus. x. 15).

Review of the First Period.—1. What period comprises the primeval history? 2. Give briefly the events of this period. 3. Which was the first promise of a Messiah? Which figures of the Messiah have we already learned about? Adam, Abel, Noe. What figure of the Church? The ark. What precautions did God take to preserve on the earth the knowledge of the true religion and the memory of the great promise of a Redeemer?

SECOND PERIOD.

HISTORY OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS (2100 TO 1500 B. C.).

XI.—THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

A. *Preparation*.—Among the many wicked people of this age arose a righteous man by the name of Abraham. God called him to be the father of a particular people through whom the true faith was to be preserved. We learn about this in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, entitled "The call of Abraham," etc.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) The call of Abraham. (b) Abraham in Sichem.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) *Idolatry began three hundred years after the deluge*, or in the year 2100 B. C. At this time lived Abraham, the son of Thare, a descendant of Sem. "Thare took Abraham, his son, and Lot, the son of Aran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abraham, his son, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Chanaan: and they came as far as Haran and dwelt there" (Chap. xi. 31). "And the Lord said to Abraham: Go forth out of thy country and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall shew thee" (Chap. xii. 1). God wished him to go forth that he might not be led into temptation through the wicked example of the idolaters. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed" (Chap. xii. 2). He was, then, to be the ancestor of a numerous people, and this was to be the chosen people of God. "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and *in thee* shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Chap. xii. 3). God promised, then, that from Abraham should be born the Messiah. (b) "So Abraham went out, as the Lord had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he went forth from Haran" (Chap. xii. 4). Haran lies in a northwesterly direction from Ur, northwestern part of Assyria. "And he took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all the substance which they had gathered, and the souls which they had gotten in Haran. And they went out to go into the land of Chanaan. And when they were come into it, Abraham passed through the country into the place of Sichem, as far as the noble vale: now the Chanaanite was at that time in the

land. And the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him: To thy seed will I give this land. And he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him" (Chap. xii. 5-7). Sichem is situated in about the central part of the land of Chanaan, that is, the promised land, the holy land.

D. *Commentary*.—1. God's wise precautions for the preservation of the true faith and the memory of the promise of the Redeemer. If left in their own country the descendants of Noe would certainly have lost their religion through the example of the wicked idolaters, and the true faith would thus have disappeared forever from among men. Therefore God called Abraham and sent him out into a strange land, among those of his fellow-men whose language even he did not know, that thus he and his descendants, living in greater retirement, might the more easily preserve the true faith and the memory of the promise of a Redeemer.

2. *The Virtues of Abraham*.—(a) *His faith*.—Abraham believed in God because he was convinced of His existence. He believed firmly and without a doubt in whatever God said to him. His faith was a strong, living faith. He was pious and godfearing and strong amidst the insults and derision he had to bear from the godless fellow-men of his own country. What must be the qualities of our faith? (b) *His obedience*. Because the faith of Abraham was a firm and living one he did whatsoever God commanded him. He was obedient. His obedience was universal because he did all that God wished him to do, and willingly because he carried out God's commands without reluctance or hesitation. Abraham's obedience is admirable when we think of the sacrifice and difficulties entailed by the commands God gave to him. He was to leave his house, his lands, his relatives, his country, and go into a strange and distant land, among a strange people, who would probably show enmity toward him. (c) *His piety*.—Soon after his arrival in the promised land he offered sacrifice to God, thus proving the depth of his piety.

3. The prophecy of the Messiah, "*In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed*" (Gen. xii. 3). God herein promises to Abraham that one who should come out of him, one of his seed, should bring blessing to all the kindred of the earth. This seed, this descendant, is the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Therefore the Saviour is to be one of the seed of Abraham.

E. *Moral Application*.—When Abraham arrived in the new land

his first act was to build an altar and offer sacrifice to God. What was the object of Abraham in this? He wished to begin his new life in the new land of God, that God and God's blessing might ever abide with him. Learn, from Abraham, to begin and end every act with God, that is, with God's blessing. Never neglect to offer each new day to God with your morning prayer.

Geography of Palestine.—It would be well to study your maps and thoroughly understand the situation and extent of the promised land, the holy land. (a) *Situation.*—Abraham passed into Sichem, and here Our Lord appeared to him and showed him the land He was giving to him and his seed. Sichem being in about the centre of the promised land, Abraham could from there see the entire land and learn to know the boundaries of the same. These were the following: In the north Lebanon, in the west the Great Sea or the Mediterranean, in the south the Arabian, and in the east the Syrian deserts. (b) *Extent.*—From this point Abraham could also know the extent of the land, as it had taken him three days, or twenty-five hours, to travel from Lebanon to Sichem. Therefore, Sichem, being situated in about the centre, the land from north to south would be the length of fifty hours' travel. The land was twice as long as wide, therefore the breadth would have been a twenty-five hours' journey.

XII.—THE PEACEABLENESS AND UNSELFISHNESS OF ABRAHAM.

THE SACRIFICE OF MELCHISEDECH.

A. *Preparation.*—In the new land Abraham found fine pastures for his herds. But as Lot also possessed herds and flocks, there soon arose a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and of Lot. We shall now see how Abraham kept the peace, how he did good without looking for reward, and how the king of Salem (Jerusalem), named Melchisedech, brought bread and wine as sacrifice.

B. *Narration.*—Points: (a) Abraham's peaceableness. (b) His love for his neighbor. (c) The sacrifice of Melchisedech. (d) Abraham's disinterestedness.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Abraham, therefore, said to Lot: Let there be no quarrel, I beseech thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren" (Chap. xiii. 8). "Brethren:" among

the Israelites it was customary to call all near relatives brothers and sisters. "Behold, the whole land is before thee: depart from me, I pray thee. If thou wilt go to the left hand, I will take the right: If thou choose the right hand, I will pass to the left" (Chap. xiii. 9). What a beautiful lesson is hereby taught us by Abraham. In his splendid unselfishness he tells Lot to choose for himself whatever fields he desires, and he will take the land that is left. "And Lot, lifting up his eyes, saw all the country about the Jordan" (Chap. xiii. 10). Lot, therefore, looked about him to see which would be the best pasture land. "And Lot chose for himself the country about the Jordan, and he departed from the East: and they were separated one brother from the other" (Chap. xiii. 11). The country on the lower Jordan to-day, that region that is now the Dead Sea, but at that time fruitful land on which were built the towns of Sodom and Gomorrha. (b) At this time the kings of Sennaar, Pontus, the Elamites and Thadal, king of all nations, made war against the kings of Sodom, Gomorrha, Adama, Seboim, and Bala. The king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrha were overthrown, and those who were with them fled to the mountains. Therefore, the opposing factions plundered the Sodomites and Gomorrhites. They took "Lot also, the son of Abraham's brother, who dwelt in Sodom, and his substance" (Chap. xiv. 12). One of those who escaped told Abraham, who lived in the vale of Mambre. "Which, when Abraham had heard, to wit, that his brother Lot was taken, he numbered of the servants born in his house three hundred and eighteen well appointed, and pursued them to Dan" (Chap. xiv. 14). Abraham defeated them in the night. "And he brought back all the substance, and Lot, his brother, with his substance, the women also, and the people" (Chap. xiv. 16). The king of Sodom went out to meet him. (c) "But Melchisedech, the king of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine, for he was the priest of the most high God, blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abraham by the most high God, who created heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God, by whose protection the enemies are in thy hands. And he gave him the tithes of all" (Chap. xiv. 18-20). Salem was later Jerusalem. (d) The king of Sodom also wished to enrich Abraham. "And he answered him: I lift up my hand to the Lord God the most high, the possessor of heaven and earth, that from the very woof thread unto the shoe latchet, I will not take of any things that are thine lest thou say I have enriched Abraham" (Chap. xiv. 22, 23). "I lift up my hand," that is, as though to swear that he would not accept any reward: only in justice to his followers who had risked their lives in his cause did he allow the men with him to accept their shares.

D. *Commentary.—Abraham's Virtues.* (a) His love of peace. Although God had given the land of Chanaan to Abraham, and he had the right to the best pastures, yet he gave them up to Lot for peace' sake. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." (b) His love for his neighbor. Abraham loved his neighbor actively and sincerely in that he risked his life to free those in captivity; he loved his neighbor disinterestedly in

that he would not accept the least reward for his courageous action. (c) His love for his neighbor was universal in that he freed not only Lot but all those with him in captivity. What kind of a love should we have for our neighbor?

Melchisedech a Figure of Our Saviour.—Melchisedech was the fourth figure of the Messiah. Melchisedech was a king. Christ is King of kings; Melchisedech was priest of the Most High; Christ is the Priest by excellence. Melchisedech blessed Abraham; Our Lord blessed the Church, represented by Abraham. Melchisedech offers bread and wine in sacrifice; Christ offers Himself a sacrifice under the appearance of bread and wine.

E. Moral Application.—Learn from Abraham his love of peace. Act in such a manner toward your brothers, sisters, and your companions that the seventh beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers," etc., may apply to you. Learn of him also his beautiful unselfishness; give up your own way for that of your companions; love your neighbor as he did and do good for love of God, not for any reward you may obtain, and then you, too, will bring down God's richest blessings upon yourselves.

Geography of Palestine.—Look up the map and find the Jordan: Its source, course, mouth.

XIII.—ABRAHAM'S FAITH AND HOSPITALITY.

A. Preparation.—Abraham's firm faith, which we have already admired, soon proved itself anew. At the same time we will find in him new virtues, namely, his friendliness and generosity toward strangers.

B. Narration.—Points: (a) Abraham's Faith. (b) The Command of Circumcision. (c) Abraham's Hospitality.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Now when these things were done, the word of the Lord came to Abraham by a vision, saying: Fear not, Abraham, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1). "Be not afraid," that is, of the strange kings you have conquered. God promised to protect him and gives Himself, that is, His love and blessing, to Abraham as a reward for his virtues. God also promised to Abraham a son. "And he brought him forth abroad, and said to him: Look up to heaven and number the stars if thou canst. And He said to him: So shall thy seed be. Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice" (Chap. xv. 5, 6). His descendants were to be as numerous as the stars. Abraham believed God, and he was justified, was a child of God on earth and an inheritor of heaven.

"And after he began to be ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, and said unto him: I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). "Walk before me," namely, live in my sight a stainless, pious life, becoming, day by day, more perfect. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and between thy seed after thee in their generations, by a perpetual covenant: to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give to thee and to thy seed the land of thy sojournment, all the land of Chanaan, for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God. Again God said to Abraham: And thou, therefore, shalt keep my covenant, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which you shall observe between me and thee, and thy seed after thee. (b) All the male kind of you shall be circumcised" (Chap. xvii. 7-10).

(c) "And the Lord appeared to him in the vale of Mambre as he was sitting at the door of his tent, in the very heat of the day" (Gen. xviii. 1). And when Abraham looked up he saw three angels in the guise of travelers, and God spoke to him in the guise of one of the angels, and Abraham said, "Lord, if I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant" (Chap. xviii. 3); that is, pass not the door of my tent without entering. "But I will fetch a little water and wash ye your feet and rest ye under the tree" (Chap. xviii. 4). And Abraham hastened into the tent, and with Sarah's help, prepared refreshments. After Abraham had given hospitality to the three angels in the guise of travelers, God renewed to the holy patriarch the promise of a son.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Abraham's Virtues. His Faith.*—Abraham believed God when He told him he was to be the father of numberless descendants, although at an advanced age he was still childless. *His Hospitality.*—Abraham invited the three strangers to enter and placed before them the best he had (cakes from white flour, the best calf, butter, and milk). He thus showed himself thoughtful and friendly toward his guests, practising thereby the virtue of hospitality.

2. A perfect walking in the presence of God. God spoke to Abraham: "Walk before me and be perfect." Abraham was ever to keep himself in the presence of God and to daily try to become more godfearing, more perfect in His sight. Should we dread only grievous sins? or should we also carefully avoid venial?

E. *Moral Application.*—You, also, my dear children, must, like Abraham, keep yourselves in the presence of God. Forget not that the eye of God is ever upon you. Always have a great horror of sin. Beg of the Lord every day to preserve you from sin.

XIV.—THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRHA.

A. *Preparation*.—God made known to Abraham, who was accompanying Him on His way, after having entertained Him in the guise of one of the three angels, that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrha, owing to the great sins of their inhabitants. Abraham tried to avert this disaster through his intercession, but without success.

B. *Narration*.—Points: (a) Abraham's intercession. (b) Lot entertaining angels. (c) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And the Lord said: The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous" (Gen. xviii. 20). Two of the three angels had gone to Sodom, and the third, who represented the Lord, was speaking to Abraham. The sins of the inhabitants of these cities, especially sins of impurity, were crying to the Lord for punishment. Abraham pleaded with the Lord in their behalf, saying, "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes" (Chap. xviii. 27), meaning that he was a mortal man subject to sin. Finally Our Lord promised to save these cities for the sake of ten just men, but even ten just could not be found. (b) Two angels came to Sodom, and Lot entertained them overnight. "And when it was morning the angels pressed him, saying: Arise, take thy wife, and the two daughters which thou hast; lest thou also perish in the wickedness of the city" (Gen. xix. 15). The angels had been sent by God to destroy the city, but God, remembering Abraham, saved Lot, his wife, and his two daughters. (c) "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord, out of heaven. And he destroyed these cities, and all the country about, all the inhabitants of the cities, and all things that spring from the earth" (Chap. xix. 24, 25). Lot and his wife and daughters were to flee from the city without looking back; but the wife of Lot looked back, and in punishment for her curiosity was changed into a pillar of salt, which was still to be seen in the time of the apostles.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Attributes of God*.—(a) *His Holiness*.—The sins of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha so displeased God that He determined to destroy these cities. What is that attribute of God by which He detests all that is evil? What do you mean by saying God is holy? (b) *His Justice*.—The wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha were deserving of punishment for their sins. Therefore God destroyed them. Lot was saved. Why was he not destroyed? (Because he was upright.) In reward for his uprightness God allowed him to be saved by the angels. What is that

attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked? What do you mean by saying God is just?

2. *The Attributes of Prayer.*—By Abraham's intercession for the people of Sodom and Gomorrha we may learn which attributes prayer should possess. Abraham prayed with devotion, with humility ("I am dust and ashes"), with confidence in the mercy of God, with perseverance in that he six times repeated his request. How must we pray?

3. *Sodomy.*—The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha gave themselves up to the sin of impurity; this was of so dreadful a nature that one dares not even to utter it, therefore it is called the mute sin or Sodomy. The sin cried to God (to heaven) for vengeance. To which class, then, does this sin belong? Of which of the other sins that cry to heaven for vengeance have we already spoken? Which are the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance?

E. *Moral Application.*—By the dreadful punishment of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha you can see what a horror God has for the sin of impurity, what an abomination it is in His sight. Esteem and love the innocence of your souls; watch and pray that you may be preserved from this sin. Resist every temptation, no matter how alluring it may seem; ask the Blessed Virgin and your guardian angels to assist you.

XV.—THE BIRTH OF ISAAC. THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

A. *Preparation.*—According to the promises of God, the wife of Abraham gave birth to a son. God again tested the obedience of Abraham by asking him to immolate this long longed for and much beloved son. We are told of this in the twenty-first chapter of Genesis, entitled "Isaac is born," etc.

B. *Narration.*—Points: (a) Isaac's birth and the test of Abraham's obedience. (b) Reward of the obedient Abraham.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And the Lord visited Sarah, as he had promised: and fulfilled what he had spoken" (Gen. xxi. 1). "And Abraham called the name of his son, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac" (Chap. xxi. 3). "And he circumcised him the eighth day, as God had commanded him" (Chap. xxi. 4). Now, after some time God tested Abraham's obedience. "He said to him: Take thy only begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of vision: and there thou shalt offer him for a holocaust upon one of the mountains which I will shew thee" (xxii. 2). From Bersabee, in a southerly direction from Hebron, where Abraham had lived since the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, to Moria (Jerusalem) was a distance of

75 km. or 20 hours. "So Abraham, rising up in the night, saddled his ass: and took with him two young men, and Isaac his son: and when he had cut wood for the holocaust he went his way to the place which God had commanded him" (xxii. 3). Abraham was going to kill Isaac with his sword and then burn the body as a sacrifice. What a dreadful test was this for Abraham, and how his loving heart must have been pierced at the thought of what he was to do. "And they came to the place which God had shewn him, where he built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it: and when he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar upon the pile of wood. And he put forth his hand and took the sword to sacrifice his son. And behold an angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying: Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. And he said to him: Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him: now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake. Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers sticking fast by the horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son" (xxii. 9-13). "And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, saying: Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the seashore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because thou hast obeyed my voice" (xxii. 15-18). Here again God gives the promise to Abraham that from his seed shall come the Saviour.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Abraham's Virtues.*—(a) *His Faith.*—Abraham possessed a firm, constant faith. God had promised that he was to be the father of numberless descendants, yet He told him to kill his only son, Isaac. Even this command did not shake the faith of Abraham.

(b) *His Obedience.*—Promptly, and without a murmur, Abraham arose in the early morning and arranged everything for the carrying out of God's order. His obedience was all the more admirable in that he himself was to slay his beloved son and give the body to the flames to be consumed.

2. *The Third Prophecy concerning the Coming of the Saviour.*—This was really only a plainer repetition of the second. God had, previous to this, said to Abraham: "In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). "In thee," that is, through thee, through one of thy descendants. Therefore in the third prophecy He only expressed Himself the more clearly when He said: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). This promise also shows that in the family of Isaac one was to look for the Messias.

3. *Isaac the Fifth Figure of the Messiah.*—The birth of Isaac was foretold through the promise of God. The birth of Our Saviour was foretold by the promise of God. Isaac was the well-beloved son of his father; Christ the well-beloved Son of God. Isaac, though innocent, is condemned to death; Christ, innocence itself, is condemned to die. It is the father of Isaac who must immolate him; it is God the Father who, by the hands of the Jews, Himself immolates Our Saviour. Isaac himself carries the wood which is to consume him; Christ Himself carries the wood of the cross on which He is to die. Isaac suffers himself to be tied on the pile without a murmur; Our Saviour suffers Himself to be nailed to the cross without a murmur. It is on Calvary that Isaac offers his sacrifice; it is on Calvary that Christ offers His sacrifice. Isaac is blessed by God as a reward for his obedience; Our Saviour is blessed by God in recompense for His obedience, and receives for inheritance all the nations of the earth.

E. *Moral Application.*—Isaac was obedient to his father unto death. Willingly he allowed himself to be bound and laid upon the wood. Learn from him the lesson of obedience to your parents. Listen willingly to their words of advice and warning, and obey promptly without murmuring; thus you will bring down upon yourselves the protection and the blessing of God.

XVI.—ISAAC MARRIES REBECCA. ABRAHAM'S DEATH.

A. *Preparation.*—In order that Isaac might continue in piety and goodness, Abraham wished to find for him a godfearing helpmeet. With this end in view he sent his servant to his former home, as in the land of Chanaan dwelt only idolators. How Isaac obtained a wife noted for her piety and how Abraham died we learn in the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis.

B. *Narration.*—Points: (a) Eliezer's journey and prayer. (b) Rebecca at the well. (c) The courting. (d) Isaac's marriage and Abraham's death.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Now Abraham was old" (xxiv. 1). He was one hundred and forty years old. "And he said to the elder servant of his house, who was ruler over all he had: Put thy hand under my thigh, that I may make thee swear by the Lord the God of heaven and earth, that thou take not a wife for my son, of the daughters of the Chanaanites, among whom I dwell: but that thou go to my own country and kindred, and take a wife from thence for

my son Isaac" (Gen. xxiv. 2-4). Abraham's own country was Chaldea, the town of Haran, where he had last lived. From Bersabee to Haran was a distance of 200 hours, or 120 miles. Eliezer, the servant, promised all to Abraham, and set out on his journey. (b) When he came to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nachor, he rested his camels near a well, and began to pray to God that His help might be given to him in this earnest and important work. "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, meet me to-day, I beseech thee, and shew kindness to my master Abraham" (xxiv. 12). Eliezer was near the well to which the daughters of the people came to draw water, and he continued to pray to God, saying: "Now, therefore, the maid to whom I shall say: Let down thy pitcher that I may drink: and she shall answer, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let it be the same whom thou hast provided for thy servant Isaac: and by this I shall understand that thou hast shewn kindness to my master. He had not yet ended these words within himself, and behold Rebecca came out, the daughter of Bathuel, son of Melcha, wife to Nachor the brother of Abraham, having a pitcher on her shoulder: An exceedingly comely maid, and a most beautiful virgin, and not known to man: and she went down to the spring, and filled her pitcher, and was coming back. And the servant ran to meet her, and said: Give me a little water to drink of thy pitcher. And she answered: Drink, my lord. And quickly she let down the pitcher upon her arm, and gave him drink. And when he had drunk, she said: I will draw water for thy camels also till they all drink" (xxiv. 14-19). Drawing the water for all the camels (ten) was a great task, and proved her diligence and kindness of heart. (c) Eliezer was taken by Rebecca to the house of her parents, where he was entertained by them, and he told them of Abraham and of his quest, and of God's answer to his prayer. In the evening a banquet was served, and in the morning Eliezer said: "Let me depart, that I may go to my master" (xxiv. 54). "Stay me not, said he, because the Lord hath prospered my way: send me away, that I may go to my master" (xxiv. 56). (d) The consent of Rebecca being given, she, with her nurse, accompanied Abraham's servant, and she was married to Isaac. "And Abraham gave all his possessions to Isaac" (xxv. 5). "And the days of Abraham's life were a hundred and seventy-five years. And decaying, he died in a good old age, and having lived a long time, and being full of days: and was gathered to his people. And Isaac and Ismael his sons buried him in the double cave which was situated in the field of Ephron the son of Seor the Hethite, over against Mambre" (xxv. 7-9).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Abraham's Virtues.*—His *Piety.*—This showed itself again in his effort to obtain for his son an upright, religious wife, that the true faith might be preserved in his family. 2. *Eliezer an Example of a Good Servant.*—Willingly he fulfilled his master's request, and without a word of complaint undertakes the long and somewhat dangerous journey. Abraham entrusted to his keeping a large part of his worldly goods, because he was confident of the honesty and trustworthiness of his faithful servant. 3. *Re-*

becca's Virtues.—She was polite and friendly toward Eliezer, and ready to do him a service. Her sympathy for the weary camels proved the kindness of her heart. Those who are truly kind of heart do not neglect the dumb brute. She was called a modest maiden, because, with all her other virtues, she particularly possessed cleanness of heart. (4. Review of Abraham's virtues.)

E. Moral Application.—Eliezer began his important work with prayer, that is, with God. Learn from him to begin everything with God. Let your first thought on arising in the morning be God! Begin your work, lessons, etc., with a little prayer to God, and then, like Eliezer, you will not be wanting for God's blessing.

XVII.—ESAU AND JACOB.

A. Preparation.—The marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, after a long time, was blessed by two sons. Of these we shall now speak.

B. Narration.—(a) Esau and Jacob Compared. (b) The Birth-right. (c) The Deceitful Obtaining of Isaac's Blessing. (d) Discovery of the Deceit.

C. Explanation.—(a) God blessed Isaac for the sake of Abraham his father. "I am the God of Abraham thy father; do not fear, for I am with thee; I will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake (Gen. xxvi. 24). That is, in reward for Abraham's virtues. Now Isaac be-sought God to give him children, and after a long time (twenty years) twins were born to him, both sons. They were named Jacob and Esau. "Isaac loved Esau, because he ate of his hunting; and Rebecca loved Jacob" (Chap. xxv. 28). (b) Now Esau, being the firstborn, possessed the birthright, and one day, being hungry, he sold it to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage. (Soup made from lentils.) "And Jacob boiled pottage; to whom Esau, coming faint out of the field, said: Give me of this red pottage, for I am exceeding faint. For which reason his name was called Edom. And Jacob said to him: Sell me thy first birthright. He answered: Lo I die, what will the first birthright avail me?" (Chap. xxv. 29, 30, 31, 32). That is, I die of hunger. What will the right of being the firstborn avail me? that is, how will it help my hunger? It was not that his hunger was so great but he wished to hide his greediness for the food. "Jacob said, Swear therefore to me. Esau swore to him, and sold his first birthright" (Chap. xxv. 33). (c) "Now Isaac was old (one hundred and thirty-seven years) and his eyes were dim, and he could not see" (Gen. xxvii. 1). Isaac dwelt in Gerara, having left Bersabee, owing to the famine which came upon the land. One day Isaac called Esau, his elder son, and said to him: "Take thy arms, thy quiver and bow and go abroad; and when thou hast taken something by hunting, make

me savory meat thereof, as thou knowest I like, and bring it, that I may eat, and my soul may bless thee before I die" (Gen. xxvii. 3, 4). Rebecca heard this; so she called Jacob, the son for whom she had a greater love, and told him to select two of the best kids that she might prepare them for him to take to his father, and thus receive the blessing meant for Esau. Now Esau was hairy and Jacob was smooth skinned. So she took the skin of the kid and covered the hands of Jacob, lest Isaac might feel of them. Jacob did all as his mother told him and entered the room of his father. "And Jacob said: I am Esau, thy firstborn; I have done as thou didst command me: arise, sit, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me" (Chap. xxvii. 19). "And Isaac said: Come hither, that I may feel thee, my son, and may prove whether thou be my son Esau or not. He came near to his father, and when he had felt him Isaac said: The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Chap. xxvii. 21, 22). After Isaac had eaten of the meat he kissed and blessed Jacob, saying: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine. And let peoples serve thee, and tribes worship thee; be thou lord of thy brethren, and let thy mother's children bow down before thee. Cursed be he that curseth thee; and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings" (Chap. xxvii. 28, 29). (d) Directly after, Esau entered with the meat he had procured by hunting, and asked for the blessing his father had promised to him; so Isaac discovered the deceit which had been practised upon him by Jacob, but he said: "And I have blessed him and he shall be blessed" (Chap. xxvii. 33). Meaning that he could not now take the blessing from Jacob. "And Esau said to him: Hast thou only one blessing, father? I beseech thee bless me also. And when he wept with a loud cry, Isaac being moved said to him: In the fat of the earth, and in the dew of heaven from above, shall thy blessing be. Thou shalt live by the sword and shalt serve thy brother; and the time shall come when thou shalt shake off and loose his yoke from thy neck" (Chap. xxvii. 38, 39, 40).

D. Commentary.—1. *Esau's Inordinate Appetite and Frivolousness.*—Esau was unworthy to be the bearer of God's promise. In his greediness for food, his gluttony, he threw away his precious birthright; even rashly swore it away. What virtue is especially opposed to the sin of gluttony? To which class of virtues does temperance belong? Which are the four cardinal or principal virtues? When do we sin by swearing? 2. *The Lie and the Dissembling.*—Jacob declared to his father that he was Esau. This was an untruth, and it was told knowingly and with the object of deceiving his father. What sin does one commit who deliberately and intentionally tells what is not true? What is meant by a lie? Are we ever allowed to tell a lie? 3. *The Ways of Being Accessory to Another's Sin.*—Rebecca said to Jacob: "follow my counsel" (xxvii. 8). When she wished him to pass himself off for Esau, she counseled him to com-

(1) Prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. (See "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism," by Urban.) (2) 349. (3) 380.

mit this deed. By counsel and partaking she helped him to commit it. Therefore, she was a sharer of Jacob's sin or accessory to it. How many ways are there of being accessory to another's sin? When are we answerable for another's sin?

E. *Moral Application*.—Lying is an abominable sin—an abomination before God. Jacob was punished for this sin. God hates a lie. "A lie is a foul blot in a man" (Ecclus. xx. 26). "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xii. 22).

XVIII.—JACOB JOURNEYS TO LABAN.

A. *Preparation*.—The punishment for his lie was not long in overtaking Jacob. Esau wished to take his life. Jacob was therefore obliged to flee.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jacob's Flight. (b) The Vision of the Heavenly Ladder. (c) Jacob's Vow. (d) Arrival at Laban's.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Rebecca knowing that Jacob's life was in danger, owing to Esau's threat to kill him, called him and said: "Now therefore, my son, hear my voice: arise and flee to Laban my brother to Haran: and thou shalt dwell with him a few days, till the wrath of thy brother be assuaged" (Chap. xxvii. 43, 44). So Jacob took the journey to Mesopotamia to the kindred of his mother, the same journey which had been undertaken by Eliezer. (b) Now when he was tired at sunset he pillowed his head upon a stone and slept. "And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it; and the Lord leaning upon the ladder, saying to him: I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land, wherein thou sleepest, I will give to thee and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and *in thee* and thy seed all the tribes of the earth *shall be blessed*" (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, 14). (c) When Jacob awakened he said: "This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven. And Jacob, arising in the morning, took the stone, which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the city Bethel, which before was called Luz" (Chap. xxviii. 17, 18, 19). "Bethel" lies a four hours' journey to the north of Jerusalem. The name signifies: "The House of God." "And he made a vow, saying: If God shall be with me, and shall keep me in the way by which I shall walk, and shall give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and I shall return prosperously to my father's house: the Lord shall be my God: and this stone which I have set up for a title shall be called the house of God: and of all things that thou shalt give to me, I will offer tithes to thee" (Chap. xxviii. 20, 21, 22). (d) Jacob arrived at the house of Laban and was received by him with much delight. And God increased the goods of Laban for Jacob's sake, because Jacob was good and pious and brought blessing to those with whom he lived.

(c) By counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise, silence, connivance, assistance, defense. (See "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism.")

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Bethel is a Figure of the Church*.—Every Catholic Church is "A House of God," because Our Lord in the great Sacrament of the Altar dwells in the tabernacle; and "A Gate of Heaven," because through her we receive the true faith and the holy Sacraments, through the worthy reception of which we may become holy and reach our eternal home. How holy, how awe inspiring, then, is this place, the Church! In the words of Jacob: "How terrible is this place." With what respect and reverence, then, we should enter this "house of God," and with what love and attention we should pray therein! By lack of respect and attention in "God's house," the Church, we dishonor God. How do we sin against the exterior worship of God?

2. *The Vow*.—Jacob promised, that is, made a vow to God, that he would raise an altar at Bethel in God's honor if God would conduct him safely home. He gave to God a voluntary promise to do something that would be agreeable to Him, though there was no obligation to do it. This is called a vow. What is a vow?

3. *The Fourth Promise of the Messias*.—God also promised to Jacob that one of his descendants should bring blessing to all nations. Who is this descendant of Jacob? Therefore we must hereafter look for the Messias among the descendants of Jacob. Jacob is the sixth figure of Our Lord.

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn from to-day's lesson to behave with reverence in Church and to pray with attention and devotion. Do not laugh, talk, etc., or you will be dishonoring God and God's house.

XIX.—JACOB'S RETURN HOME. ISAAC'S DEATH.

A. *Preparation*.—Laban, although Jacob had brought to him God's blessing, began to envy Jacob because he also became rich. Therefore Jacob returned to his father's house after an absence of twenty years. We shall now see how Jacob on his return was received by his brother Esau.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jacob's Homeward Journey and His Fear of Esau. (b) His Wrestling with an Angel. (c) The Reconciliation. (d) Isaac's death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Jacob, knowing that Laban was envious of him, and "Especially the Lord saying to him, Return into the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee" (Gen. xxxi. 3), started on his

homeward journey. But he was very much afraid of his brother Esau, and he prayed to God saying: "Deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am greatly afraid of him" (Gen. xxxii. 11), and "he set apart of the things which he had presents for his brother Esau" (Chap. xxxii. 13). These he sent on ahead by his servants, that his brother Esau might be inclined to be reconciled. (b) "He remained alone" (that is, that he might pray): "and behold a man wrestled with him till morning. And when he saw that he could not overcome him, he touched the sinew of his thigh, and forthwith it shrank" (Chap. xxxii. 24, 25). Thereby it was made plain to him that this mysterious man could have overcome him had he so wished, but he did not, in order to show Jacob, by this his apparent victory, that he might be encouraged in the threatening danger in the meeting with his brother Esau. Jacob realized also that he had been wrestling with a supernatural being; therefore he said: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me" (Chap. xxxii. 26). "But he said: Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel; for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men!" (Chap. xxxii. 28). "And Jacob called the name of the place Phaul, saying: I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved" (Chap. xxxii. 30). The supernatural being then was God in the guise of an angel. (c) "And Jacob, lifting up his eyes, saw Esau coming" (Gen. xxxiii. 1). "And he went forward and bowed down with his face to the ground seven times until his brother came near. Then Esau ran to meet his brother, and embraced him: and clasping him fast about the neck, and kissing him, wept" (Chap. xxxiii. 3, 4). (d) "And he came to Isaac his father in Mambre, the city of Arbee, this is Hebron: wherein Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years. And, being spent with age, he died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Gen. xxxv. 27-29).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.*—(a) *His Faithfulness.*—God, in Jacob's remarkable vision, promised to him, from the heavenly ladder, that He would bring him back into this land; and we see that God did what He had promised. What do we call this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying God is faithful? (b) *His Goodness.*—God guided Jacob back prosperously to his father's house; and protected him from the wrath of Esau, whose heart he softened to mildness and reconciliation; thus God bestowed great blessings upon Jacob. What do we call this attribute of God by which He bestows blessings? What do you mean by saying God is good?

2. *Envy.*—When Laban saw that Jacob had become rich he envied him and no longer showed him a friendly countenance. When do we sin by envy?

3. *Jacob's Prayer.*—The important day upon which Jacob was to meet Esau had dawned; therefore Jacob remained alone in order

that he might pray undisturbed with greater attention and devotion. How must we pray? The fruit of Jacob's prayer was the help of God in his need. What are the principal fruits of prayer?

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn of Jacob in all your adversity and need to have recourse to God. The greater the need, the greater God's help. Prayer is an inexhaustible fountain of all good.

XX.—JOSEPH'S DREAM.

A. *Preparation*.—Jacob lived with his family in the land of Canaan; of his sons he loved best the one next to the youngest, named Joseph.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Hatred of Joseph's Brothers toward Him. (b) Joseph's Dream.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Joseph, when he was sixteen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, being but a boy; and he accused his brethren to his father of a most wicked crime. Now Israel loved Joseph above all his sons, because he had him in his old age; and he made him a coat of divers colors" (Gen. xxxvii. 2, 3). Israel, that is Jacob. The coat was made from fine cloth of many colors. "And his brethren seeing that he was loved by his father, more than all his sons, hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him" (Gen. xxxvii. 4).

(b) "Now it fell out also that he told his brethren a dream, that he had dreamed, which occasioned them to hate him the more. He dreamed also another dream, which he told his brethren, saying: I saw in a dream, as it were, the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars worshipping me. And when he told this to his father and brethren, his father rebuked him, and said: What meaneth this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren, worship thee upon the earth? His brethren therefore envied him: but his father considered the thing with himself" (Gen. xxxvii. 5, 9-11). His father rebuked him because in the beginning he did not himself believe that Joseph was chosen for a higher life, but he "considered the thing;" that is, the dreams, and soon felt that these dreams were revelations of God.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Joseph's Virtues: His Piety and Fear of the Lord*.—Joseph was the best beloved son of his father, because he was a pious, unspoiled youth. He would not take part in the crime of his brethren, but on the contrary felt it his duty to make it known to his father.

2. *When it is One's Duty to Reveal the Faults of Others*.—The Eighth Commandment forbids us to make known the faults of others without necessity. What is that sin called by which we unnecessarily make known the faults of others? Who are guilty of detraction?

Why was not Joseph guilty of this sin when he accused his brethren to his father? Because his father could correct them; therefore it was for the good of the wrong doers. When may we make known the faults of others?

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn from Joseph to be pious and God fearing in your youth, that you may continue so through life.

XXI.—JOSEPH IS SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

A. *Preparation*.—Joseph's brethren could not bear him, because of his dreams and because he had accused them to their father. Therefore they endeavored to have him removed forever from their sight. We shall now hear how they carried out this plan.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Brothers' Plan. (b) The Selling of Joseph. (c) Deception of the Brothers, and Jacob's Sorrow.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Now Jacob sent Joseph to his brethren, who were feeding their father's flocks in Sichem, to see if all were well with them and with their cattle. "So, being sent from the vale of Hebron, he came to Sichem" (Gen. xxxvii. 14). Sichem was a journey of twenty hours from his home in Hebron. "And Joseph went forward after his brethren, and found them in Dothain. And when they saw him afar off before he came nigh them, they thought to kill him. And said one to another: Behold the dreamer cometh. Come, let us kill him and cast him into some old pit" (Gen. xxxvii. 17-20). The water being scarce, pits were dug to serve as cisterns for receiving the rain water. "And Ruben hearing this, endeavored to deliver him out of their hands, and said: Do not take away his life, nor shed his blood: but cast him into this pit, that is in the wilderness, and keep your hands harmless: now he said this, being desirous to deliver him out of their hands and to restore him to his father. And as soon as he came to his brethren, they forthwith stripped him of his outside coat, that was of divers colors: and cast him into an old pit where there was no water. And sitting down to eat bread, they saw some Ismaelites on their way coming from Galaad, with their camels, carrying spices and balm and myrrh to Egypt" (Gen. xxxvii. 21-25). How great must have been their hatred toward their brother if they could calmly sit down to eat while poor Joseph wept and begged for mercy. (b) "And Juda said to his brethren: What will it profit us to kill our brother, and conceal his blood? It is better that he be sold to the Ismaelites, and that our hands be not defiled: for he is our brother and our flesh. His brethren agreed to his words. And when the Madianite merchants passed by they drew him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ismaelites, for twenty pieces of silver: and they led him into Egypt" (Chap. xxxvii. 26-28). Twenty pieces of silver was the price one received for a young slave. Egypt the northeastern part of Africa. (c) "And Ruben returning to the pit found not the boy: and rending his garments, he went

to his brethren, and said: The boy doth not appear, and whither shall I go?" (Chap. xxxvii. 29, 30). Ruben had been absent when Joseph was sold. He was afraid to return to his father because, as the oldest, he would be held responsible for Joseph's return home. "And they took his coat and dipped it in the blood of a kid which they had killed. And the father acknowledging it said: It is my son's coat, an evil wild beast hath eaten him, a beast hath devoured Joseph. And tearing his garments, he put on sackcloth, mourning for his son a long time" (Chap. xxxvii. 31, 33, 34).

D. Commentary.—1. *The Fifth Commandment.*—Joseph's brothers could not bear him. They envied him because he was preferred to them by their father. From envy came dislike and hatred, which was carried so far that they even wished to kill their brother. Thus envy leads to murder. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I. John iii. 15). What does God forbid by this Fifth Commandment?

2. *The Sins of Omission.*—Ruben and Juda sinned less toward Joseph than their brethren. Juda in that he suggested the sale of Joseph, that thus his life might be spared. Ruben was absent at the sale and wished to save Joseph and return him to his father. But as the oldest he should have made a greater and braver endeavor to save Joseph and return him to Jacob. But he left this undone through fear of his brothers, and therefore was guilty of a sin of omission. In how many ways can we sin?

E. Moral Application.—From small causes often come great effects. Joseph's brothers did not control the aversion they at first felt for him, therefore the evil increased; they next envied, then hated their brother, and at last would not even have shrunk from murdering him. Learn from this to control in your youth the sins you are most likely to fall into; later they will be more difficult to overcome, as the evil will have taken deep root.

XXII.—JOSEPH IN THE HOUSE OF PUTIPHAR.

A. Preparation.—Poor Joseph was now brought into Egypt and there sold as a slave. His new master was named Putiphar. We shall now hear how it fared with him.

B. Narration.—(a) Joseph in the House of Putiphar. (b) The Temptation. (c) The False Accusation against Joseph and His Punishment.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And Joseph found favor in the sight of his master, and ministered to him; and being set over all by him, he governed the house committed to him, and all things that were delivered to him" (Gen. xxxix. 4). (b) Now the wife of Putiphar was a wicked woman and tried her best to tempt Joseph to commit sin. Each time she tried to tempt Joseph he rebuked her and would not be tempted. Finally she took hold of Joseph and tried to force him to commit a sin, but he broke away from her, leaving a piece of his garment in her hand. (c) "For a proof therefore of her fidelity, she kept the garment, and showed it to her husband when he returned home; and said: The Hebrew servant whom thou hast brought came to me to abuse me. And when he heard me cry, he left the garment which I held, and fled out. His master hearing these things, and giving too much credit to his wife's words, was very angry. And cast Joseph into the prison, where the king's prisoners were kept, and he was there shut up" (Gen. xxxix. 16-20). Putiphar believed too readily the words of his wife, without giving Joseph a chance to prove his innocence.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Joseph's Virtues*. (a) *His Piety and Fear of the Lord*.—Also in his misfortune Joseph remained pious. Therefore, "The Lord was with him" (Gen. xxxix. 2). When Putiphar's wife shamefully tempted him to commit a crime he answered her, saying: "How, then, can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?" (xxxix. 9). In his piety and fear of the Lord he remained steadfast against temptation. (b) *His Conscientiousness and Diligence*.—His new duties, as slave to Putiphar, Joseph fulfilled conscientiously and with diligence, so that the possessions of his master increased daily in his hands. 2. *The Sins of Putiphar's Wife*.—This wicked woman tried to tempt Joseph to commit a great sin. If one intentionally tempts another to do wrong, one gives scandal. Of which sin, then, was this woman guilty? When do we scandalize our neighbor? (Under the Fifth Commandment.) Scandal is a very great sin, for he who gives scandal is a minister of Satan and a murderer of souls. But this was not the only sin of this woman. She lied to her husband in that she accused Joseph wrongfully. In this she accused Joseph of a sin of which he was not guilty. This is called calumny or slander. Which was the second sin, then, that Putiphar's wife committed? Who are guilty of calumny or slander? (See Eighth Commandment.)

E. *Moral Application*.—Joseph was tempted against purity, but remained steadfast. He thought, when tempted, of God, and feared to displease Him by sin. Learn of him to think of God when tempted against purity. Remember that His eye is ever upon you. Like Joseph, love the virtue of purity, guard it as your most precious

jewel. It is the most beautiful adornment of a beautiful soul. "Oh how beautiful is the chaste generation! for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and with men" (Wis. iv. 1).

XXIII.—JOSEPH IN PRISON.

A. *Preparation*.—That God does not forsake His own was proved in the case of Joseph during his imprisonment.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Dreams of Two of Pharaoh's Servants. (b) Interpretation of the dreams. (c) Fulfilment of the Interpretation.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was angry with his butler and his baker, because they had offended him, and he had them put into the same prison where Joseph was confined. "And they both dreamed a dream the same night, according to the interpretation agreeing to themselves" (Gen. xl. 5). When Joseph asked them what was the matter, as he saw they were sad, "They answered: We have dreamed a dream, and there is nobody to interpret it to us. And Joseph said to them: Doth not interpretation belong to God? Tell me what you have dreamed" (Chap. xl. 8). Meaning when dreams are from God, as these were, the interpretation of them is a gift of God. "The chief butler first told his dream: I saw before me a vine, on which were three branches, which by little and little sent out buds, and after the blossoms brought forth ripe grapes; and the cup of Pharaoh was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into the cup which I held, and I gave the cup to Pharaoh. (b) Joseph answered: This is the interpretation of the dream: The three branches are yet three days; after which Pharaoh will remember thy service, and will restore thee to thy former place, and thou shalt present him the cup according to thy office, as before thou was wont to do. The chief baker, seeing that he had wisely interpreted the dream, said: I also dreamed a dream, that I had three baskets of meal upon my head; and that in one basket, which was uppermost, I carried all meats that are made by the art of baking, and that the birds ate out of it. Joseph answered: This is the interpretation of the dream: The three baskets are yet three days: After which Pharaoh will take thy head from thee and hang thee on a cross, and the birds shall tear thy flesh" (Chap. xl. 8-13, 16-19). (c) Now it all happened as Joseph foretold.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Joseph's Virtues*. (a) *Piety and Trust in God*.—Also in his new misfortune Joseph remained faithful to God and murmured not against Him. Therefore in his prison God was with him. (b) *His Mercy*.—He had been made keeper of his fellow prisoners, but was never rough and hard toward them; on the con-

trary, he showed them great sympathy and compassion. Therefore when he saw the troubled countenances of the butler and the baker he asked them in his sympathy (mercy) why they were sad. He wished to comfort the sorrowful. By what kind of a good work did he wish to help them? Which are the spiritual works of mercy?

(c) *Humility*.—Joseph intended to interpret the dreams of the two servants for them, but that they would not think he did it through his own power he said: "Doth not interpretation belong to God?" (xl. 8). He wished to give all honor of the true interpretation to God alone. In this he proved his humility. What is humility? 2. *The Physical Evils in this World*.—The pious Joseph had a great deal to bear. Sold by his heartless brethren, he came as a slave into the house of Putiphar. At first it went well with him there, as he had won the affection of his master by his diligence and conscientiousness. But his good fortune was of short duration, as the wicked wife of Putiphar through her lying and slander caused the innocent Joseph to be cast into prison. Why did God permit such a great misfortune to overtake him? God had great things yet in store for Joseph. He wished later to render him great and mighty, and that he might not then become proud and forgetful of God. God allowed him to suffer that he might grow in humility and piety and trust in God. So often the just on earth are allowed to suffer that they may grow in virtue. They will obtain their reward, if not in this world, then most certainly in the next. If God takes care of all things, why is there so much suffering?

E. *Moral Application*.—As the pious Joseph did not despair nor murmur against God in his misfortunes, so must we not murmur if, though we deserve it, ill fortune comes to us. We must never doubt God's goodness nor neglect to pray to Him. "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). Trust in God and rest assured that the almighty, infinitely good, and all just God will richly reward you for all suffering patiently endured.

XXIV.—JOSEPH'S ELEVATION.

A. *Preparation*.—At last dawned for Joseph the release from his sufferings. God richly rewarded him for all that he had so patiently endured; and made of him a great and mighty man in Egypt.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Pharaoh's Dreams. (b) The Butler's Remembrance of Joseph. (c) The Interpretation of the Dreams by Joseph. (d) Joseph's Elevation.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "After two years Pharaoh had a dream. He thought he stood by the river, out of which came up seven kine, very beautiful and fat; and they fed in marshy places. Other seven also came up out of the river, ill favored and lean fleshed; and they fed on the very bank of the river in green places. And they devoured them whose bodies were very beautiful and well conditioned. So Pharaoh awoke. He slept again, and dreamed another dream. Seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk full and fair. Then seven other ears sprung up thin and blasted, and devoured all the beauty of the former. Pharaoh awaked after his rest. And when morning was come, being struck with fear, he sent to all the interpreters of Egypt, and to all the wise men; and they being called for, he told them his dream, and there was not any one that could interpret it" (Gen. xli. 1-8). Pharaoh, in his anxiety to know the meaning of his dreams, sent for all the learned men and all those who could interpret dreams throughout Egypt, but without the desired result. (b) At length the butler, whose dream Joseph had interpreted and whom he had asked to remember him by the king that he might be freed from prison, thought of Joseph whom he had ungratefully forgotten for two years, confessed his forgetfulness to the king, and told him how a young Hebrew had interpreted his and his fellow servant's dream. (The descendants of Abraham in the Land of Canaan were called Hebrews.) "Forthwith at the king's command Joseph was brought out of the prison, and they shaved him, and changing his apparel, brought him in to him. And he said to him: I have dreamed dreams, and there is no one that can expound them; now I have heard that thou art very wise at interpreting them. Joseph answered: Without me God shall give Pharaoh a prosperous answer. So Pharaoh told what he had dreamed" (Chap. xli. 14-17). (c) "Joseph answered: The king's dream is one: God hath shewn to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven beautiful kine and the seven full ears, are seven years of plenty; and both contain the same meaning of the dream. And the seven lean and thin kine that came up after them, and the seven thin ears that were blasted with the burning wind, are seven years of famine to come; which shall be fulfilled in this order: Behold there shall come seven years of great plenty in the whole land of Egypt: After which shall follow other seven years of so great scarcity, that all the abundance before shall be forgotten; for the famine shall consume all the land, and the greatness of the scarcity shall destroy the greatness of the plenty. And for that thou didst see the second time a dream pertaining to the same thing: it is a token of the certainty, and that the word of God cometh to pass and is fulfilled speedily. Now therefore let the king provide a wise and industrious man, and make him ruler over the land of Egypt" (Chap. xli. 25-33). The man appointed had to be wise, that he might take all necessary precautions to lay up the needed stores for use in the time of famine, and he had to be industrious, so that all parts of the land throughout Egypt might be cultivated, so as to yield as quickly and as bountifully as possible, and this was a work that would not brook delay. (d) "The counsel pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. And he said to them: Can we find such another man, that is full of the spirit of God? He said therefore to Joseph: Seeing

God hath shewn thee all that thou hast said, can I find one wiser and one like unto thee? Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of thy mouth all the people shall obey; only in the kingly throne will I be above thee" (Chap. xli. 37-40). In this Pharaoh wished to explain that, though he should remain king, Joseph next to him would be the greatest man in Egypt. "And again Pharaoh said to Joseph: Behold, I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt. And he took his ring from his own hand, and gave it into his hand; and he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck" (Chap. xli. 41, 42). The ring that the king gave Joseph bore his own seal and name. Whoever possessed this seal ring could in the name of the king give commands. "And he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him, and that they should know he was made governor over the whole land of Egypt. And the king said to Joseph: I am Pharaoh; without thy commandment no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And he turned his name and called him in the Egyptian tongue The Saviour of the World" (Chap. xli. 43-45).

D. *Commentary.*—I. *The Ruling of Divine Providence.*—How wonderfully God led Joseph! It seemed as if He had quite forgotten and forsaken him. But He intended him for higher things, and arranged all things for the carrying out of that purpose. Thus God ever watches over and governs the world, and this we call the divine Providence. The ruling of divine Providence throughout Joseph's career we will now consider in separate parts. Joseph was sold and later imprisoned. His brothers and Potiphar's wife did him great injury; he was obliged to suffer injustice. God allowed the evil; that is, the physical evil, because He knew how to turn it into good. If God ordains and governs all things in the world, why do physical evils come upon us? Does He wish this? "You thought evil against me, but God turned it into good" (Gen. i. 20). Now we shall see how God turned evil, that from it good might come. Because Joseph was put into prison he came in contact with the two servants of Pharaoh, and thus was enabled to interpret their dreams. The ungrateful butler, in his own good fortune, forgot the innocent Joseph, and it seemed as if the latter must languish the remainder of his days in prison. Then God gave dreams to the king, and allowed none of the wise men the power to interpret them; therefore the butler was again put in mind of Joseph, and this led to his release and good fortune. How wonderful is the ruling of divine Providence! What does God continually do for the world?

2. *Joseph a Figure of Christ.*—Joseph was one of the most beautiful figures of the Messias. Joseph was the well beloved son of

Jacob, his father; Christ is the well beloved son of God, His father. Joseph was envied, hated, maltreated, and sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver. Christ was envied, hated, and maltreated by the Jews, his brethren, and betrayed and sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver. Joseph is condemned for a crime of which he is innocent; Our Saviour is condemned for crimes of which He is innocent. Joseph is found in prison with two criminals; he announces to one his pardon, to the other his punishment. Christ is placed on the cross between two malefactors. He promises heaven to the penitent one, and leaves the impenitent one to his perdition. Joseph passes from prison to the throne of Pharaoh; Christ passes from the prison of the tomb to the throne of God. Joseph was made governor of Egypt and hailed as the "Saviour of the World," and all knees bent before him. Christ is King of the World, and bears a name holy above all names. "In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10).

E. *Moral Application*.—Think of Joseph when you are tempted to evil. Learn also of him to forgive your enemies; to "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 44, 45).

XXV.—THE FAMINE IN EGYPT.

A. *Preparation*.—The dreams of Pharaoh came true according to Joseph's interpretation. After the seven years of plenty came the famine, which reached as far as Canaan. Therefore Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy supplies.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The famine in Egypt. (b) The famine in Canaan. (c) The meeting. (d) Arrival at their father's.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) The seven years of scarcity which Joseph had foretold began to come, and the famine prevailed in the whole world, but there was bread in all the land of Egypt. And when there also they began to be famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. And he said to them: Go to Joseph; and do all that he shall say to you. And the famine increased daily in all the land, and Joseph opened all the barns, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine had oppressed them also (Gen. xli. 54, 55, 56). Joseph had stored in the barns all the grain that had been saved during the years of plenty, and this was now sold to the people to make into bread. Jacob said to his sons, "I have heard that wheat is sold in Egypt: go ye down, and buy us necessities, that we may live, and not be consumed with want." (b) So

the ten brethren of Joseph went down to buy corn in Egypt. While Benjamin was kept at home by Jacob, who said to his brethren: Lest perhaps he take any harm in the journey (Gen. xlii. 2-5). Owing to what he thought had happened to Joseph, Jacob was afraid to trust Benjamin, his youngest son, out of his sight. (c) They came into Egypt and bowed down before Joseph, who was governor in the land. "And though he knew his brethren, he was not known by them (xlii. 8). During the twenty-two years he had been in Egypt he had greatly changed. "And remembering the dreams, which formerly he had dreamed, he said to them: You are spies. You come to view the weaker part of the land" (xlii. 9). He thought of that dream especially in which the sheaves of his brothers bowed down before his sheaf. He called them spies in order to test them. He wished to see if they had become better. They told him who they were and that one brother was not living, and one, the youngest, had been left at home. Joseph said, "Send one of you to fetch him, and you shall be in prison till what you have said be proved, whether it be true or false. So he put them in prison three days" (xlii. 16, 17). He imprisoned them, not for revenge, but that they might think over the past, the wrong they had done to him, and repent of their sin. He held one of the brothers as a pledge, but the others he brought out of prison, and he spoke to them saying: "Bring your youngest brother to me, that I may find your words to be true, and you may not die." They did as he had said. And they talked one to another: "We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother, seeing the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear: therefore is this affliction come upon us." And Ruben, one of them, said: "Did not I say to you: Do not sin against the boy; and you would not hear me? Behold his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood, because he spoke to them by an interpreter" (xlii. 20-23). Joseph did not speak to them in the Hebrew tongue, but had what he said translated to them by an interpreter; thus they knew not that he understood all that they spoke. "And he turned himself away a little while and wept" (xlii. 24). Their words had made known to Joseph that they had thought over and come to the knowledge of their sin, and he wept in holy joy at the improvement in his brethren. "And taking Simeon, and binding him in their presence, he commanded his servants to fill their sacks with wheat, and to put every man's money again in their sacks, and to give them besides provisions for the way: and they did so" (xlii. 25). Joseph retained one of them as a pledge that the others might return, and he chose Simeon because, as the eldest, he was the most guilty. "But they having loaded their asses with the corn went their way. And one of them, opening his sack to give his beast provender in the inn, saw the money in the sack's mouth. And said to his brethren: My money is given me again; behold it is in the sack. And they were astonished and troubled, and said one to another: What is this that God hath done unto us?" (xlii. 28). Joseph had the money replaced in their bags because he did not wish to take pay from his father and his brethren. They were afraid when they found it, lest, it being known, they might be taken as thieves while they were yet in Egypt. (d) And they came to Jacob their father in the Land of Canaan, and they told him all things that had befallen them (xlii. 29).

D. *Commentary.*—*Works of mercy.* Joseph spoke severely to his brethren, and placed them in prison, to bring them, by the means of affliction, to a sense of their former sin and a sincere repentance for it. To admonish sinners, to bring them to a knowledge of their guilt and to sincere repentance, thereby helping them to lead better lives, is one of the spiritual works of mercy. Of which other spiritual work of mercy have we already spoken? Which are the spiritual works of mercy? Joseph did not wish to accept pay for the provisions that were to satisfy the hunger of his father and brethren. He considered it as his duty to feed the hungry. This is one of the corporal works of mercy. Which are the corporal works of mercy? The physical evils in the world. Joseph's brothers, though innocent of the charge against them, were thrown into prison. God allowed this suffering to come upon them, through Joseph, that they might mend their ways. There is suffering in the world, that the sinner may mend his ways and not be forever lost. For what other reason? If God takes care of all things, why is there so much suffering?

E. *Moral Application.*—Hunger is a suffering. And we must, according to God's command, feed the hungry. Learn to be generous and unselfish; deny yourselves that you may help those who are in want. Remember that what you do for the least of God's creatures you are doing for Him, and He will richly repay you.

XXVI.—SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT.

A. *Preparation.*—When the provisions, which the brothers of Joseph had taken to Canaan, were consumed they again journeyed to Egypt.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Preparation for the journey. (b) Arrival in Egypt and the fear of the brethren. (c) The meeting. (d) The repast.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "In the meantime the famine was heavy upon all the land. And when they had eaten up all the corn, which they had brought out of Egypt, Jacob said to his sons: Go again and buy us a little food. Juda answered: The man declared unto us with the attestation of an oath, saying: You shall not see my face, unless you bring your youngest brother with you. If, therefore, thou wilt send him with us, we will set out together, and will buy necessities for thee. And Juda said to his father: Send the

boy with me, that we may set forward, and may live: lest both we and our children perish" (Gen. xlii. 1-4, 8). The brothers were afraid to return without Benjamin lest they be taken for spies and be put to death. Jacob was loth to part with Benjamin, fearing that something might happen to him on the way. Juda promised to be responsible for his safe return, saying, "I take the boy upon me, require him at my hands. Unless I bring him again, and restore him to thee, I will be guilty of sin against thee forever" (xliii. 9). "Then Israel said to them: If it must needs be so, do what you will; take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down presents to the man, a little balm, and honey, and storax, myrrh, turpentine and almonds. And take with you double money, and carry back what you found in your sacks, lest perhaps it was done by mistake. And take also your brother and go to the man. And may my Almighty God make him favorable to you; and send back with you your brother, whom he keepeth, and this Benjamin: and as for me I shall be desolate without children" (xliii. 11-14).

(b) "So the brothers took the presents and double money and Benjamin, and went down into Egypt and stood before Joseph. And they were very much afraid. Said one to another: Because of the money, which we carried back the first time in our sacks, we are brought in: that he may bring upon us a false accusation, and by violence make slaves of us and our asses" (xliii. 15, 18). The steward had taken them into the house, and they told him of the money they had found in their sacks. He told them to be at peace and not to fear, and he brought Simeon out to them. "And having brought them into the house he brought water, and they washed their feet, and he gave provender to their asses. But they made ready the presents to give Joseph when he would come at noon: for they had heard that they should eat bread there" (xliii. 24, 25). Joseph was very friendly this time to his brethren, especially because they had complied with his desire and brought Benjamin. (c) Then Joseph came into his house, and they offered him the presents, holding them in their hands; and they bowed down with their face to the ground. But he, courteously saluting them again, asked them, saying: Is the old man, your father, in health, of whom you told me? Is he yet living?" (xliii. 27, 28). This question of Joseph's showed the great love he bore to his father. "And Joseph, lifting up his eyes, saw Benjamin his brother, by the same mother, and said: Is this your young brother of whom you told me? And he said: God be gracious to thee, my son. And he made haste because his heart was moved upon his brother, and tears gushed out; and going into his chamber he wept" (xliii. 29, 30). He was moved to tears seeing Benjamin, who was little more than an infant when he had last seen him, before he was sold. (d) "And when he had washed his face, coming out again, he refrained himself, and said: Set bread on the table" (xliii. 31). He had washed his face so that his brothers would not notice that he had been weeping. "They sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his age. And they wondered very much" (xliii. 33). They wondered, that is, they were astonished that Joseph should know their ages and how to place them accordingly. "Taking the messes which they received of him: and the greater mess came to Benjamin, so that it exceeded by five parts. And they drank and

were merry with him" (xliii. 34). Joseph increased Benjamin's share that he might prove his brethren and find whether they envied Benjamin as once they had envied him.

D. Commentary.—*Joseph's Virtues.* (a) His love for his parents. The first question Joseph put to his brethren concerned his father. He asked if he were still alive and well. Joseph had great love for his father, and his welfare was nearest his heart. By what commandment are we told that we must love our parents? What is the fourth commandment? What does God command by the fourth commandment? When do children sin against the love they owe their parents? (b) Brotherly love. How much Joseph loved his brethren is especially shown in his meeting with Benjamin. He had not seen him for twenty-two years, not since he had been very small, but was so touched at meeting him again that he shed tears of love and joy. God wants us to love one another. This He commands us in the second of the chief commandments. How does God command us to love our neighbor? The duty of making restitution. Jacob gave his sons to take back with them the money that they had found in their sacks, "Lest perhaps it was done by mistake." Then they would have been ill-gotten goods, which it would have been their duty to restore to their owner. What must we do when we have ill-gotten goods, or have unjustly injured our neighbor?

E. Moral Application.—Learn from Jacob to conscientiously return whatever belongs to your neighbor. No matter how small, even a pencil or a penholder, return it to its owner. The gate of heaven is small and narrow, and no one may enter who has kept ill-gotten goods. Be ever honest and just. "Honesty is the best policy."

XXVII.—JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS AND MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN.

A. Preparation.—After the repast Joseph wished again to assure himself that his brothers had really become converted. Therefore he once more tested them, and being convinced of their change of heart he made himself known.

B. Narration.—(a) The silver cup. (b) The cup in Benjamin's sack. (c) Juda wishes to make himself bondman for his brother. (d) The comforting of the brethren and their return home.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “And Joseph commanded the steward of his house, saying: Fill their sacks with corn, as much as they can hold; and put the money of every one in the top of his sack. And in the mouth of the younger’s sack put my silver cup, and the price which he gave for the wheat. And it was so done. And when they were now departed out of the city, and had gone forward a little way, Joseph sending for the steward of his house said: Arise and pursue after the men: and when thou hast overtaken them, say to them: Why have you returned evil for good?” (xliv. 1, 2, 4). (Joseph had showed them much kindness and had invited them to his repast, and was this the way they had rewarded him?) “The steward did as commanded him. And when he had overtaken them, he spoke to them the same words. And they answered: Why doth our lord speak so, as though thy servants had committed so heinous a crime? The money that we found in the top of our sacks we brought back to thee from the Land of Canaan: how, then, should it be that we should steal out of thy lord’s house gold or silver? With whomsoever of thy servants shall be found that which thou seekest, let him die and we will be the bondmen of thy lord” (xliv. 6-9). So confident were they that the cup could not be found in their sacks that they willingly offered to die if it should be found with them. “And he said to them: Let it be according to your sentence: with whomsoever it shall be found, let him be my servant, and you shall be blameless. (b) Then they speedily took down their sacks to the ground, and every man opened his sack. When he had searched all he found the cup in Benjamin’s sack. Then they rent their garments, and loading their asses again returned into the town” (xliv. 10-13). They rent, that is, tore their garments as a sign of their great distress. “And Juda at the head of his brethren went in to Joseph (for he was not yet gone out of the place), and they altogether fell down before him on the ground. And he said to them: Why would you do so? Know you not that there is no one like me in the science of divining?” (xliv. 14, 15). They fell down before him, that was to show that they humbled themselves and begged for his mercy. “He said to them why would you do so?” That is, why did you take my cup? This was a most important question, as the answer would prove to Joseph whether his brothers had really changed in heart. If they were as wicked as formerly they would not hesitate to throw all the blame on Benjamin in order that they might save their own lives. “And Juda said to him: What shall we answer, my lord? Or what shall we say? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are all bondmen to my lord, both we and he with whom the cup was found” (xliv. 16). By this answer Juda wished to make known not that Benjamin had committed a fault, but that they all had been guilty in the sight of the Lord, and that now God punished them by this inexplicable misfortune. This shows that he humbly acknowledged and repented his past sin against Joseph, and felt that he and his brethren deserved to be punished for it. Having declared that the one with whom the cup should be found should die, they wished to remain as slaves in order that Benjamin might be spared. “Joseph answered: God forbid that I should do so (that is, accept you all as slaves): he that stole the cup, he shall be my bondman: and go you away free to your father” (xliv. 17). This was the last test Joseph made. He wished to see if they would will-

ingly allow their youngest brother to remain as a slave. "Then Juda, coming nearer, said boldly: I beseech thee, my lord, let thy servant speak a word in thy ear, and be not angry with thy servant: for after Pharaoh thou art my lord, thou didst ask thy servants the first time: Have you a father or a brother? And we answered thee, my lord: We have a father, an old man, and a young boy, that was born in his old age; whose brother by the mother is dead: and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him tenderly. (c) Therefore thy servant will stay instead of the boy in the service of my lord, and let the boy go up with his brethren. For I can not return to my father without the boy, lest I be a witness of the calamity that will oppress my father" (xliv. 18-20, 33, 34). (d) Joseph now knew that his brethren were indeed converted. "Joseph could no longer refrain himself before many that stood by: whereupon he commanded that all should go out, and that no stranger be present at their knowing one another. And he lifted up his voice with weeping, which the Egyptians and all the house of Pharaoh heard. And he said to his brethren: I am Joseph, is my father yet living? His brethren could not answer him, being struck with fear" (xlv. 1-3). Joseph wished all the strangers to depart that his brethren might not feel ashamed before them. The brothers now feared lest Joseph should seek for vengeance. "And he said mildly to them: Come nearer to me. And when they were come near him, he said: I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Make haste, and go ye up to my father, and say to him: Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of the whole land of Egypt. Come down to me; linger not. And falling upon the neck of his brother Benjamin, he embraced him and wept. And Benjamin in like manner wept also on his neck. And Joseph kissed all his brethren, and wept upon every one of them: after which they were emboldened to speak to him" (xlv. 4, 9, 14, 15). (e) "So he sent away his brethren, and at their departing said to them: Be not angry on the way (that is, quarrel not as to whose was the greater guilt concerning Joseph). And they went up out of Egypt and came into the Land of Canaan to their father Jacob" (xlv. 24, 25).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Joseph's Virtues.* (a) His parental love. As soon as Joseph had made himself known he again asked for news of his father. This was a proof of his great love for his father. His peaceableness. He took no revenge upon his brethren, but tried to comfort them by saying that God had sent him to Egypt. Then he embraced them all to show by the kiss of peace that he had entirely forgiven them. 2. *The Ruling of Divine Providence.* "Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God" (xlv. 8). Herein Joseph acknowledges that the events of his life were according to the will of God. "You thought evil against me; but God turned it into good" (1. 20). The great wrong done to Joseph by his brethren was turned by God into good. 1. Joseph was tried in the virtues of humility and confidence in God, and was found steadfast; thus he was prepared for his exaltation. 2. The Egyptians, as

well as his own father and brethren were saved from starvation during the famine; and, 3. Joseph's brethren were converted into better men. What does God continually do for the world? What do we call God's supreme care in preserving and governing the world? If God takes care of all things, why is there so much suffering?

E. Moral Application.—Learn from Joseph to love peace, to be reconciled to all, even those who have wronged you and caused you suffering. Peaceableness is one of the most beautiful virtues of the Christian life. The more readily we forgive our neighbor, the more readily will God forgive us. "To forgive injuries and to bear wrongs patiently" are two of the most beautiful spiritual works of mercy. Never return evil for evil; forgive and pray for those who have offended you. Think of those sublime words of Christ while dying on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34).

XXVIII.—JACOB JOURNEYING TO EGYPT.

A. Preparation.—Jacob could not at first believe that his son Joseph was alive and a mighty ruler in Egypt. Only after showing him the rich gifts Joseph had sent could his sons finally convince him. Then he no longer wished to remain in Canaan. His love for Joseph drew him to Egypt.

B. Narration.—(a) The joyful tidings. (b) Jacob's sacrifice and God's promise. (c) Meeting between father and son. (d) And the settling of his family in Gessen.

C. Explanation. (a) "And they told him saying: Joseph thy son is living: and he is ruler in all the land of Egypt. Which when Jacob heard he awakened, as it were, out of a deep sleep, yet did not believe them" (Gen xlv. 26). Jacob had grieved during twenty-three years over Joseph's death, and now he learns from his sons that Joseph was not dead. It seemed to Jacob as if he had slept and dreamed a dread dream of Joseph's death. "They, on the other side, told the whole order of the thing. And when he saw the wagons and all that had been sent, his spirit revived" (xlv. 27). He was happy, being convinced of the truth of their tidings. "And he said: It is enough for me, if Joseph my son be yet living: I will go and see him before I die" (xlv. 28). It was enough to know that his son lived, that was the main thing—his position, his wealth, his power were but secondary considerations. (b) And Israel, taking his journey with all that he had, came to the well of the oath, and killing victims there to the God of his father Isaac" (xlv. 1). Jacob wished first to offer sacrifice and pray to God that he might know His will and know if he were doing right in leaving the land which God had given to him and to his descendants. "He heard

him by a vision in the night calling him, and saying to him: Jacob, Jacob. And he answered him: Lo, here I am. God said to him: I am the most mighty God of thy father; fear not, go down into Egypt, for I will make a great nation of thee there. I will go down with thee thither, and will bring thee back again from thence: Joseph also shall put his hands upon thy eyes. And Jacob rose up from the well of the oath: and his sons took him up, with their children and wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry the old man" (xlvi. 2-5).

(c) "And he sent Juda before him to Joseph, to tell him; so that he should meet him in Gessen. And when he was come thither, Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet his father in the same place: and seeing him, he fell upon his neck, and embracing him wept. And the father said to Joseph: Now shall I die with joy, because I have seen thy face and leave thee alive" (xlvi. 28-30). (d) "After this Joseph brought his father to the king, and presented him before him: and he blessed him. And being asked by him: How many are the days of the years of thy life? He answered: The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my father's. And blessing the king he went out. But Joseph gave land to his father and his brethren in Egypt, in the best place in Ramesses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Joseph's Virtues.* The love and respect he bore his father. In his love Joseph hastened to meet his father, and wept for joy as he saw him. With the greatest respect he sprang from his own chariot and ran and fell upon his father's neck, embracing him with childlike love. What does God command by the fourth commandment? 2. *The Aim and End of Man.* Jacob described his life as a pilgrimage. As the pilgrim follows a fixed aim, so as to reach the goal where his wandering will cease, so also for man in his earthly wandering—life—is there an aim and an end. What is the end of man? What is his aim? What is heaven? For what end did God create us? 3. *God's wise precautions for the preservation of the true faith.* Jacob's sons had mostly married, in the Promised Land, wives from Canaan. This was a great danger for the preservation of the true faith. In time they would have become one people with the heathen Canaanites, and perhaps the true faith would have been lost. Therefore God led them into Egypt, that in the land of Gessen they might more easily preserve the true faith, grow into a stronger people and conquer the Land of Canaan.

E. *Moral Application.*—Do not forget that your life also is but a short pilgrimage. Live so that you may gain your object, which is heaven. Ask yourselves in all your actions what will they avail me in my effort to reach heaven? Often raise your mind and heart to heaven, your true home. By the grace of Jesus, and by your

earnest co-operation, you, too, will reach it. "Momentary joy often leads to eternal pain, but short pain to eternal joy." Try hard, then, make every effort to keep free from sin. Heaven is well worth all the pains you may take. (Review of the geography of the Promised Land. Situation and extent. Where is Sichem? Hebron? Salem? Moria? Mambre? Bersabee? Gerar?)

XXIX.—JACOB'S AND JOSEPH'S DEATH.

A. *Preparation*.—Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt, honored and respected and tenderly cherished by Joseph. At length he died.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jacob's prophecy and death. (b) Mourning and burial. (c) Joseph's death.

C. *Explanation*.—Jacob, seeing his end approach, assembled around his bed his twelve sons and announced to them what was to happen to their descendants. He blessed them each in turn, and when he came to Juda he spoke thus: "Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise: thy hand shall be on the necks of thy enemies: the sons of thy father shall bow down to thee. The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations" (Gen. xlix. 8, 10). This promise announced that the sovereign authority should reside in the tribe of Juda until the coming of the Messias, the expected of all nations. It teaches us further that it is in the tribe of Juda, to the exclusions of all others, we must look for the Messias. "And when he had ended the commandments, wherewith he instructed his sons, he drew up his feet upon the bed, and died: and he was gathered to his people" (xlix. 32). (b) "And when Joseph saw this, he fell upon his father's face, weeping and kissing him. And he commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father" (l. 1). The Egyptians preserved the bodies with balsam and other things to prevent their corruption. "And while they were fulfilling his commands there passed forty days: for this was the manner with bodies that were embalmed, and Egypt mourned for him seventy days. And the time of mourning being expired, Joseph spoke to the family of Pharaoh: If I have found favor in your sight, speak in the ears of Pharaoh. For my father made me swear to him saying: Behold I die. Thou shalt bury me in my sepulchre which I have digged for myself in the Land of Canaan. So I will go up and bury my father and return. And Pharaoh said to him: Go up and bury thy father according as he has made thee swear. So he went up, and there went with him all the ancients of Pharaoh's house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and the house of Joseph with his brethren. And carrying him into the Land of Canaan they buried him in the double cave which Abraham had bought. together with the field for a burying place. And Joseph returned into Egypt with his brethren, and all that were in his company, after he had buried his father" (l. 3-8, 13, 14).

(c) Again Joseph's brethren begged him for forgiveness of their sin against him, and he was touched to tears. "And his brethren came to him: and worshipping prostrate on the ground they said: We are thy servants. And he answered them: Fear not: can we resist the will of God? You thought evil against me; but God turned it into good, that he might exalt me, as at present you see, and might save many people. And he dwelt in Egypt with all his father's house: and lived a hundred and ten years. After which he told his brethren: God will visit you after my death, and will make you go out of this land, to the land which he swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And he made them swear to him saying: God will visit you, carry my bones with you out of this place. And he died, being a hundred and ten years old. And being embalmed, he was laid in a coffin in Egypt" (l. 18-25).

D. *Commentary*.—1. The Ruling of divine Providence. You thought evil against me, but God turned it into good (l. 20). The same as in chapter xxvii. D. 2. 2. The fifth promise of the Messias. Jacob on his death-bed promised the coming of the Saviour. "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of all nations." According to this prophecy the Saviour, Whom all nations were so anxiously expecting, should come at a time when Juda had lost his sceptre and the Jews their independence. And this was verified at the time of the birth of Our Saviour. For Herod, an Idumean, was the first stranger who ruled in Judea. 3. *A good death*. Jacob, as well as Joseph, had a happy, peaceful death. Their happy death was the reward of a virtuous life.

E. *Moral Application*.—Do you also wish for a happy death? Then live accordingly. Have a horror for and fly from sin like Joseph, and, like him, practise every virtue. Hold yourself in readiness that death may not surprise you in sin. Remember "that as you live so shall you die." Beg of God every day to preserve you from sin, that having lived a clean life you may die a happy death.

REVIEW OF THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS.

1. Lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 2. Joseph's virtues. 3. The prophecies concerning the Messias. 4. The figures of the Messias. 5. The means used by divine Providence to preserve the true faith and the memory of the promises of a Redeemer.

XXX.—PATIENT JOB.

A. Preparation.—During the time of the Patriarchs there lived in Arabia a very holy man named Job, especially noted for his great patience in suffering.

B. Narration.—(a) Job's wealth. (b) His first trials. (c) His leprosy. (d) His friends. (e) Job's sorrow and reward.

C. Explanation.—(a) *Patriarchs*, the pious ancestors or forefathers of the human race, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "There was a man in the land of Hus, whose name was Job, and that man was simple and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil. And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And his possession was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a family exceeding great: and this man was great among all the people of the East" (Job i. 1-3). (b) *Trial*, any experience or event that tries patience or faith. Job had to bear almost every form of trial. God permitted the devil to put his virtue to the test. In a single day the devil took from Job all his riches, and caused the death of all his ten children. On hearing this afflicting news Job showed the most admirable resignation to the will of God, saying: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord" (i. 21). (c) Again, God allowed Satan to attack the health and the life of Job. "So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of the foot even to the top of his head" (ii. 7). The devil was so exasperated at not having been able to make Job murmur against God that he afflicted his person, with God's permission, with the loathsome disease of leprosy, by which the different parts of the body decay and finally fall away. Poor, suffering, and disgusting to all his fellow men who feared contagion, he was obliged to sit down on a dunghill, and with pieces of broken potsherds scrape his ulcers. Even this trial seemed not sufficient, and his wife was allowed to upbraid him in his misery. She told him to curse God. "And he said to her: Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?" (ii. 10). "Foolish woman," ungodly, wicked woman. (d) Three friends of Job, hearing what had befallen him, came to comfort him. "And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no man spoke to him a word: for they saw that his grief was very great" (ii. 12). Then finally they claimed that he had been guilty of some sin for which God had punished him. Job replied that he was innocent, and announced that beautiful prophecy of the Redeemer: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God" (xix. 25, 26). And he reproved his friends for

their unkindness in upbraiding him by these touching words: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me" (xix. 21). (e) Job, fearing he had sinned through imprudent words in defending his innocence, showed his sorrow, saying: "Therefore I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes" (xlii. 6). God vindicated his innocence and required his friends to offer up a sacrifice of expiation. Job prayed for them and God forgave them the pain they had caused the holy man; and God rewarded Job by giving him again as many children as he had before, twofold greater riches, a long life and most holy death.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Sufferings of this Life*. Like the pious Joseph, Job was obliged to endure sufferings and trials of all kinds. He lost his wealth, his ten children were taken from him, and finally he suffered from a most dreadful disease. Nevertheless Job was not a sinner who deserved these trials as a punishment due to his guilt, but a most holy man. God allows trials and sufferings to come upon the just man, to enrich him with His grace and to purify him from all earthly dross, that his reward may be exceeding great in heaven. If God takes care of all things, why is there so much suffering? 2. *Scandal*. Job's wife counseled him to renounce God. This was a great sin. If any one deliberately tempts another to sin, he gives scandal. By which commandment are we forbidden to give scandal? Why in the fifth commandment? 3. *False Suspicion*. Job's friends reproached him, saying that he must have been a great sinner in order to draw down upon himself such afflictions from the hand of God. They had no basis for this reproach, because they knew Job to be a pious and God-fearing man. Therefore they were judging rashly. When without good or sufficient reason we imagine evil of our neighbor, we are guilty of false suspicion, which is forbidden by the eighth commandment. When without good reason we believe the evil to be true we are guilty of rash judgment, also forbidden by the eighth commandment. When are we guilty of false suspicion and rash judgment? "Judge not, that you may not be judged" (Matt. vii. 1). 4. *The Resurrection of the Body*. Job said: "In the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God" (Job xix. 25, 26). By these words Job expressed his firm belief that one day, namely on the last (judgment) day, he would rise again from the grave and that his body would be reunited to his soul. How long shall the body remain separated from the soul? What do we call this raising of the body to life?

(The eleventh article of the creed.) 5. *The Veneration and Invocation of the Saints.* Job's friends had sinned grievously, by their unjust reproaches to Job. God was exceedingly angry with them for the pain they thus caused His holy servant and he bade them to offer sacrifice and to beg Job to pray for them, that they might be forgiven for their sin; and because of Job's intercession God forgave them. From this we conclude: (a) That it is pleasing to God and therefore right if we venerate and invoke the saints. (b) That the intercession of the saints is a great benefit to us because the prayers of the saints in heaven are much more powerful than the prayers of the just on earth. What does the Catholic Church teach concerning the veneration and invocation of saints?

E. Moral Application.—Learn from Job patience in suffering. If sickness and pain be your portion, try to bear it with resignation to God's holy will. Never complain if He sends you trials, no matter how hard it may be to bear them. "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). Bear patiently your sorrows for Jesus' sake, who suffered and died on the cross for love of you.

THE TIME OF MOSES (1500 TO 1450 B. C.).

XXXI.—BIRTH OF MOSES.

A. Preparation.—After the death of Jacob and Joseph their descendants in Egypt, according to God's promise, became so numerous a people that the Egyptians feared to be overcome by them. Therefore one of their kings gave the command that every newly born male child of the descendants of Jacob and Joseph should be slain. Among these infants was one Moses, whom God had destined to lead back His people into the Promised Land. We shall now hear about the birth and rescue of Moses.

B. Narration.—(a) Oppression of the Israelites. (b) Moses' birth and exposure. (c) His rescue.

C. Explanation.—(a) "The children of Israel increased, and became very numerous, and growing exceedingly strong they filled the land. In the meantime there arose a new king over Egypt, that knew not Joseph: And he said to his people: Behold the people of the children of Israel are numerous and stronger than we. Come, let us wisely oppress them lest they multiply: and if any war shall rise against us, join with our enemies, and having overcome us, depart out of the land" (Ex. i. 7-10). The children of Israel were the descendants of Jacob. God having changed

his name from Jacob to Israel. "Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel: for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men?" (Gen. xxxii. 28). The new king no longer remembered the great services Joseph had rendered the people of Egypt (What were these services?) and now oppressed his descendants, the Israelites. "Therefore he sat over them masters of the works to afflict them with burdens. And they made their life bitter with hard works in clay and brick, and with all manner of service, wherewith they were overcharged in the works of the earth" (Ex. i. 11, 144). These taskmasters forced them to work beyond their strength, even urging them on with the lash. "But the more they oppressed them the more they multiplied and increased" (i. 12). The king now commanded that the women having charge of the new-born infants of the Hebrews should kill every male child (Hebrews, see explanation, chap. 24. "There was a young man, a Hebrew"), but these women feared God and would not obey the command of the king. "Pharao therefore charged all his people, saying: Whatsoever shall be born of the male sex, ye shall cast into the river" (i. 24) "the river," that is, the Nile. (b) "After this there went a man of the house of Levi, and took a wife" (ii. 1) and a son was born to them. For three months the mother hid him, but now it was no longer possible, as the king's officers thoroughly inspected the houses of the Israelites. "And when she could hide him no longer, she took a basket made of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and pitch: And put the little babe therein, and laid him in the sedges by the river's brink" (ii. 3). She made the basket of bulrushes, that being light it would not sink, and covered it with pitch, that the water might not penetrate it. She placed it in the sedges by the river's brink so that the current could not drive it away; then she left his sister, Mary by name, to watch what would be done. (c) "And behold the daughter of Pharao came down to bathe in the river; and her maids walked by the river's brink. And when she saw the basket in the sedges, she sent one of her maids for it: and when it was brought, she opened it and seeing within it an infant crying, having compassion on it she said: This is one of the babes of the Hebrews. And the child's sister said to her shall I go and call to thee a Hebrew woman, to nurse the babe? She answered: Go. The maid went and called her mother, and Pharao's daughter said to her: Take this child and nurse him for me: I will give thee thy wages. The woman took, and nursed the child: and when he was grown up, she delivered him to Pharao's daughter. And she adopted him for a son, and called him Moses, saying: Because I took him out of the water." (Moses or Moyses, in the Egyptian tongue, signifies one taken or saved out of the water.)

D. Commentary.—I. Attributes of God. (a) His faithfulness. God had promised Jacob on his going out from the land of Chanaan, that his descendants in Egypt would become a numerous people. This promise was fulfilled, as the story we have just heard shows us. What do we call this attribute of God by which He keeps His promises? What do you mean by saying God is faithful?

(b) His wisdom. God had destined Moses to lead back His people out of Egypt into Chanaan. According to the decree of the cruel king, Moses should have been killed. God so arranged it that the life of Moses was spared, and that at the moment he was placed in the river the king's daughter arrived on the spot, noticed the basket, had it brought to her and was so pleased with the babe that she adopted it as her own. Because God knows how to dispose all things so as best to attain His end we say He is all-wise. What do you mean by saying God is all-wise? 2. *Mercy*. The daughter of the heathen king had sympathy for the crying babe. Her heart was touched with compassion and she rescued him from the water and adopted him as her own. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." 3. *God's Wise Precautions for the Preservation of the True Faith*. At first all went well with the Israelites in Egypt; they were on very friendly terms with the heathen inhabitants of the land. Herein, however, lay the great danger to the true faith, because through their friendship with the Egyptians they would by degrees contract many of the heathen customs and finally fall into idolatry. Therefore God allowed the Israelites to be severely oppressed by the Egyptians that they might no longer be on terms of friendship with them and thus endanger the true faith by contracting any of the habits or beliefs of the idolatrous Egyptians. Thus the true faith continued to be preserved pure and unhurt among God's chosen people.

E. *Moral Application*.—Like the daughter of the Egyptian king you too can rescue poor little babes from temporal and eternal death by taking part in the noble works of the "Society of the Childhood of Jesus." This is an association for children and has for its main object the gathering of alms that the poor little heathen infants in China may be bought from their cruel parents and through the holy Sacrament of Baptism be made children of God. These little ones are placed where their physical and spiritual welfare is assured. Every priest can and will give you further explanation regarding this society.

XXXII.—MOSES' FLIGHT AND CALLING.

A. *Preparation*.—Moses protected his people from the dread oppression of the taskmasters, therefore Pharaoh hated him and sought to kill him. Moses was obliged to flee out of Egypt and remained for a long time in the desert, where one day God appeared to him and told him to lead the chosen people out of Egypt.

B. Narration.—(a) Moses' sympathy for his people and his flight from Egypt. (b) The burning bush and Moses' call. (c) His departure from Jethro. (d) His appearance and that of Aaron in Egypt.

C. Explanation.—(a) "In those days after Moses was grown up, he went out to his brethren: and saw their affliction, and an Egyptian striking one of the Hebrews his brethren, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Ex. ii. 11, 12). This he did by a particular inspiration of God; as a prelude to his delivering the people from their oppression and bondage. "And Pharaoh heard of this and sought to kill Moses: but he fled from his sight, and abode in the land of Madian" (ii. 15). Moses fled at the age of 40 years. Madian is in the southeast of the peninsula Sinai. "Now Moses fed the sheep of Jethro, his father in law, the priest of Madian: and he drove the flock to the inner parts of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, Horeb" (iii. 1). Horeb one of the mountains of Sinai. (b) "And the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And Moses said: I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, he called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said: Moses, Moses. And he answered: Here I am. And he said: Come not nigh hither, put off the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (iii. 2-5). Moses was commanded to take off his shoes as a token of respect to show that he was treading on holy ground where God appeared to him. "And he said: I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face. And the Lord said to him: I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of the rigour of them that are over the works" (iii. 6, 7). ("Their cry." This expression signifies the fervor of their prayer for deliverance out of slavery.) "And knowing their sorrow, I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, into a land that floweth with milk and honey" (iii. 8), meaning a very fruitful, productive land. "But come and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt." And Moses said to God: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt" (iii. 10, 11). Moses here shows his humility. Pharaoh would not listen to his word. But God makes answer, "I will be with thee" (iii. 12). That is, with God's help he could do all things. Moses asks God what answer he should make to the people if they asked who sent him, "If they should say to me what is his name?" (iii. 13). "God said to Moses: I am who am. He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is hath sent me to you" (iii. 14). "I am who am," that is, I am being itself, eternal, self-existent, independent, infinite without beginning, end or change; and the source of all other beings. "Moses answered and said: They will not believe me, nor hear my voice, but they will say: The

Lord hath not appeared to thee. Then He said to him: What is that thou holdest in thy hand? He answered a rod. And the Lord said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent: so that Moses fled from it. And the Lord said: Put out thy hand and take it by the tail. He put forth his hand and took hold of it, and it was turned into a rod" (iv. 1-4). Another sign also He gave him and then said: "But if they will not even believe these two signs, nor hear thy voice: take of the river water, and pour it out upon the dry land, and whatsoever thou drawest out of the river shall be turned into blood. Moses said: I beseech thee, Lord, I am not eloquent from yesterday and the day before: and since thou hast spoken to thy servant, I have more impediment and slowness of tongue. The Lord said to him: Who made man's mouth? or who made the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? did not I?" (iv. 9-11). God meant by this that He made all man, could He not also give to man eloquence of tongue. "Go therefore, and I will be in thy mouth: and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak. But he said: I beseech thee, Lord, send whom thou wilt send. The Lord being angry at Moses said: Aaron the Levite is thy brother, I know that he is eloquent: behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and seeing thee shall be glad at heart. Speak to him, and put my words in his mouth: and I will be in thy mouth, and in his mouth, and will shew you what you must do. He shall speak in thy stead to the people, and shall be thy mouth: but thou shalt be to him in those things that pertain to God. And take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do the signs" (iv. 12-17). God became angry because Moses was so slow to listen and do His bidding. "Put my words in his mouth," meaning impart to him what I have told you. "And the Lord said to Moses in Madian: Go, and return into Egypt: for they are all dead that sought thy life. And the Lord said to Aaron: Go into the desert to meet Moses. And he went forth to meet him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, by which he had sent him and the signs that he had commanded. And they came together, and they assembled all the ancients of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had said to Moses: and he wrought the signs before the people. And the people believed. And they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel: and that he had looked upon their affliction: and falling down they adored" (iv. 19, 27-31).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His eternity. "I am who am." The ever-present being, who always was and always will be. What do we call this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying God is eternal? "Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed from eternity to eternity thou art God" (Ps. lxxxix. 2). (b) His omniscience. This is observed in the following instances: "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry" (Ex. iii. 7) and "They will believe the word of the latter sign; take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do the signs" (iv. 8, 17). God knew the past of

His people. He knew their present condition and the future — the faith they would have in the signs He sent. What do we call the attribute of God by which He knows all things perfectly — past, present, and to come? What do you mean by saying God is omniscient? (c) His omnipotence. God can make the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the blind see. What do we call that attribute of God by which He can do all things by the mere power of His will? What do you mean by saying God is all-powerful? (d) His holiness. Moses did not listen to God. This was sinful and God became angry, because He hates all that is in the least evil. What do we call that attribute of God by which He loves and wills only what is good, and hates all that is evil? What do you mean by saying "God is holy"? (e) His unchangeableness. Although five times Moses hesitated in accepting God's command, "Thou mayst bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (iii. 10), he could not change God's decree. He was chosen by God to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land and was obliged to fulfill this desire of God, and carry out His decree. What do you call that attribute of God by which He remains eternally the same, without any change either in Himself or in His decrees? What do you mean by saying "God is unchangeable"? (f) His faithfulness. God has promised Jacob that He would lead his descendants out of Egypt again into the land of Chanaan. And we see how God will keep this promise. What is that attribute of God by which He will surely keep His promises? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"?

2. *The Sanctity of the House of God.* "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (iii. 5). And this because God had appeared to Moses in that place. Moses took off his shoes and covered his face as tokens of his reverence while in God's presence. Every one of our churches is "holy ground," because in them (a) Our Lord is present on the altar at every Mass and (b) our dear Lord ever dwells in the tabernacle in the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar. What does the real presence of Our Lord in the blessed Sacrament require of us?

E. *Moral Application.*—Since the church is so holy a place you must show the greatest reverence therein. To remove your shoes as Moses did is not commanded by God, but He does require of us to remove, that is to put aside all worldly and unholy thoughts, all wilful distractions when we enter into His house. Show, then, the greatest reverence and devotion in church, where Jesus Christ deigns

to be present, a willing prisoner of love in the tabernacle. Go often to visit Him, tell Him all your cares, your joys, your sorrows. He invites us, saying: "Come to me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28).

XXXIII.—THE TEN PLAGUES.

A. *Preparation*.—When Moses went to Pharaoh and made known to him his intention of leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, Pharaoh refused his consent and oppressed the people the more. In order to force the proud king to allow the people to depart God visited the Egyptians with ten plagues.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The pride and obstinacy of Pharaoh. (b) Nine plagues. (c) Pharaoh's obstinacy and the sending of the tenth plague.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "After these things Moses and Aaron went in, and said to Pharaoh: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Let my people go that they may sacrifice to me in the desert. But he answered: Who is the Lord that I should hear His voice, and let Israel go? I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. v. 1, 2). "The God of Israel," that is the God whom the Israelites adore. "Who is the Lord that I should hear His voice," that is, why should I listen to Him, He can not command me; and in the hardness of his heart he oppressed the Israelites more cruelly. And God multiplied his signs and wonders by the hands of Moses and Aaron. "So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and did as the Lord had commanded. And Aaron took the rod before Pharaoh, and his servants and it was turned into a serpent. And Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians and they also by Egyptian enchantments did in like manner" (vii. 10, 11). By the assistance of the evil spirit they wrought these wonders. "And they every one cast down their rods, and they were turned into serpents: and Aaron's rod devoured their rods. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not hearken to them as the Lord had commanded." (b) And God told Moses and Aaron to send plagues upon the land. "And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord had commanded: and lifting up the rod he struck the water of the river before Pharaoh and his servants: and it was turned into blood. And the fishes that were in the river died: and the river became foul, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river, and there was blood in all the land of Egypt" (vii. 20, 21). The second plague was of frogs, which covered all the land and entered into all the houses. "But Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said to them: Pray ye the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord" (viii. 8). But Pharaoh did not keep his promise, and the third plague was of gnats, the fourth of flies of divers kinds, and again Pharaoh promised to let the people go if the flies were taken from the land, but he did not keep his word. The fifth plague

was a disease which killed the cattle of the Egyptians. "The Lord therefore did this thing the next day: and all the beasts of the Egyptians died, but of the beasts of the children of Israel, there died not one" (ix. 6). The sixth plague was of boils in men and beasts which caused them great suffering. The seventh of hail. "And the hail destroyed through all the land of Egypt all things that were in the fields, both man and beast: and the hail smote every herb of the field, and it broke every tree of the country. But in the land of Gessen, where the children of Israel were, the hail fell not" (ix. 25, 26). Pharaoh again promised to let the people go, but broke his word. The eighth plague was locusts. "And they came up over the whole land of Egypt: and rested in all the coasts of the Egyptians innumerable, the like as had not been before that time nor shall be hereafter. And they covered the whole face of the earth wasting all things" (x. 14, 15). Again Pharaoh begged for forgiveness and gave his promise. But when the locusts were destroyed he broke his word. The ninth plague was total darkness. "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there came horrible darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. No man saw his brother nor moved himself out of the place where he was: but whosoever the children of Israel dwelt there was light" (x. 22, 23). (c) "And the Lord said to Moses yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh and Egypt, and after that he shall let you go and thrust you out. Thus saith the Lord: at midnight I will enter into Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of the Egyptians shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sitteth on his throne, even to the firstborn of the handmaid that is at the mill, and all the first-born of beast" (xi. 1, 4, 5). The firstborn, that is, the first male child of every family—the eldest.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Pride*. Pharaoh said: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear His voice?" He refused to hearken to the true God. He alone wished to be supreme lord in Egypt and would not show respect or reverence to any higher power. His was the great sin of pride. When do we sin by pride? 2. *The Sins against the Holy Ghost*. The miracles which Moses performed by means of his rod as well as the plagues which came upon Egypt were so many salutary admonitions sent by God to Pharaoh and his people that they might recognize Him as the true God and that Pharaoh would allow the children of Israel to depart. But despite these wholesome warnings Pharaoh remained obstinate in sin. Which are the six sins against the Holy Ghost? 3. *The Attributes of God*. (a) His forbearance. The Egyptians had done great wrong to the Israelites and deserved to be punished by the almighty God. God, however, deferred this punishment and sent Moses and Aaron again to the king to gain his consent to the departure of the Israelites. Pharaoh would not listen, but remained obstinate and hard of heart. Then

(c) Presumption of God's mercy, despair, resisting the known Christian truth, envy at another's spiritual gifts, obstinacy in sin, persistent impenitence.
(See "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism," by Rev. A. Urban.)

God sent the first plague upon him and his people, hoping to move him to repentance. In all ten plagues were sent, but they did not follow quickly one upon the other, but broke out at great intervals, that the king and the people might have time for thought and repentance before another and severer plague came upon them. By what attribute of God does He delay visiting His punishments upon sinners? What do you mean by saying "God is long-suffering"? (b) His justice. Once the patience of God has been exhausted, His just punishment ensues. So it was with the Egyptians. What do you mean by saying "God is just"?

E. *Moral Application*.—Pride blinds the heart. This is seen in the instance of Pharaoh, who having had occasion so often to witness the power of God, still refused to believe in or obey Him. Beware of pride, the source of so many sins and of so much unhappiness in this world and in the next. It destroys even the light of faith. Control every thought that might lead you to feel proud. Remember that all we have, all we are, is through God's bounty—of ourselves we are nothing. "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Eccl. x. 15). Ask your Blessed Mother, that beautiful model of humility, to pray for and aid you. Ask Jesus, meek and humble of heart, to make your heart like unto His.

XXXIV.—THE PASCHAL LAMB AND THE FLIGHT OUT OF EGYPT.

A. *Preparation*.—The greatest of the ten calamities or plagues was the last, in which the firstborn of each family was slain.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Paschal lamb. (b) The tenth plague. (c) The departure of the Israelites.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall be to you the beginning of months: it shall be the first in the months of the year" (Ex. xii. 1, 2). This month was the seventh month of their year. The Israelites should now begin the year in Spring (April), while heretofore they had begun in the Autumn (September). "Speak ye to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and say to them: On the tenth day of this month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses. And it shall be a lamb without blemish, a male, of one year: according to which rite also you shall take a kid." (Instead of a lamb a kid could be sacrificed, and all the same rites and ceremonies were to be used with the one as with the other.) "And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month: and the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both

the side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread, with wild lettuce" (xii. 3, 5-8). "Unleavened bread," bread made without yeast, prepared with flour and water only. "Wild lettuce," bitter-tasting plant. "And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste: for it is the phase (that is the passage) of the Lord" (xii. 11). They were to have their loins girdled, a staff in their hand, and sandals on their feet, as travelers ready for the journey. It was the "passage of the Lord," because the Lord in His visitation was to pass by the houses of the Israelites and leave their firstborn unmolested. "And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt" (xii. 13). (b) "And it came to pass at midnight, the Lord slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive woman that was in the prison, and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh arose in the night, and all his servants, and all Egypt; and there arose a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house wherein there lay not one dead. And Pharaoh calling Moses and Aaron, in the night said: Arise and go forth from among my people, you and the children of Israel: go, sacrifice to the Lord as you say. Your sheep and herds take along with you, as you demanded, and departing, bless me" (xii. 29-32). (c) And the same day the Lord brought forth the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their companies" (xxii. 51). "And the children of Israel set forward from Ramesse to Socoth, being about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Sanctify unto me every firstborn" (xiii. 1, 2). Sanctification in this means that the firstborn males of the Hebrews should be deputed to the ministry in the divine worship. When later on the children of Levi were called to the priesthood the firstborn of the other tribes were ransomed with gold. Even the firstborn of the beasts were to be sanctified, that is, given for a sacrifice. And God said to Moses, thou shalt say: "With a strong hand did the Lord bring us forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (xiii. 14). "Strong hand," that is, powerful, a power which Pharaoh could no longer resist. "And Moses took Joseph's bones with him: because he had adjured the children of Israel, saying: God shall visit you, carry out my bones from hence with you. And marching from Socoth they encamped in Etham in the utmost coasts of the wilderness" (xiii. 19, 20).

D. Commentary.—1. The Paschal Lamb, the Eighth Figure of the Messias. The Paschal lamb was to be without spot; Our Saviour is the true Lamb of God without spot. The Paschal lamb was sacrificed and no bone allowed to be broken; Our Saviour was sacrificed on the cross and His bones were not broken. The Paschal lamb was roasted in sacrifice on two skewers in the form of a cross; Christ

was raised in sacrifice on the cross. Through the Paschal lamb the firstborn of the Israelites were preserved from temporal death. Jesus Christ died to save us from eternal death. 2. *Attributes of God.* (a) His justice. The loss of their firstborn was a punishment due to Pharaoh's obstinacy in resisting God, and his hardness of heart toward the Israelites, and due to his people for their cruel oppression of the Hebrews. This punishment was also deserved for the putting to death of the new-born babes of the descendants of Israel. What is that attribute of God by which He punishes the wicked according to their deserts? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? (b) His faithfulness. God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their descendants would be a numerous people. He further promised Jacob that He would lead His people out of the land of Egypt. God kept these promises. What do we call that attribute of God by which He surely keeps His promises? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? 3. *The Jewish and the Christian Easter.* The Israelites yearly celebrated the Passover in grateful remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the preservation of their first-born from temporal death at the time of God's visitation. We Christians celebrate Easter at the same season, the Paschal season, our Easter, in thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the bondage of Satan through the passion, and death on the cross, of Our Saviour Jesus Christ and for our preservation from eternal death.

E. *Moral Application.*—The Israelites were freed from their bondage in Egypt. So you, my dear children, have been freed from the bondage of Satan in the holy Sacrament of Baptism, and many times freed from sin in the Sacrament of Penance. The Israelites never returned into the bondage of the Egyptians. Try, then, my dear children, to flee from every occasion of sin, that Satan may never again obtain his power over you. Be brave, be strong, resist sin at the outset, dare to do right, dare to be true, true to your faith, true to your conscience. Keep near your Blessed Mother, that she may fold her mantle of protection about you, that you may never in thought, word or deed wound the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us pray for the preservation of your innocence.

XXXV.—THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE RED SEA.

A. *Preparation.*—The people of Israel passed quickly to the Red Sea. How they passed through it and what then happened we will now hear.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Passage through the Red Sea. (b) Destruction of Pharaoh and his armies.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removing, went behind them: and together with him the pillar of the cloud, leaving the fore part, stood behind, between the Egyptians' camp and the camp of Israel: and it was a dark cloud, and enlightening the night, so that they could not come at one another all the night" (Ex. xiv. 19, 20). (b) "And when Moses had stretched forth his hand over the sea, the Lord took it away by a strong and burning wind blowing all the night, and turned it into dry ground: and the water was divided. And the children of Israel went in through the midst of the sea dried up: for the water was as a wall on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursuing went in after them, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and horsemen through the midst of the sea, and now the morning watch was come, and behold, the Lord looking upon the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, slew their host, and overthrew the wheels of the chariots, and they were carried into the deep. And the Egyptians said: Let us flee from Israel: for the Lord fighteth for them against us. And the Lord said to Moses: Stretch forth thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and horsemen." (c) "And when Moses had stretched forth his hand toward the sea, it returned at the first break of day to its former place: and as the Egyptians were fleeing away, the waters came upon them, and the Lord shut them up in the middle of the waves. And the water returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the army of Pharaoh, who had come into the sea after them, neither did there so much as one of them remain. But the children of Israel marched through the midst of the sea upon dry land, and the waters were to them as a wall on the right hand and on the left: And the Lord delivered Israel on that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And they saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore: And the people feared the Lord, and they believed the Lord and Moses His servant" (xiv. 21-31).

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Attributes of God*. (a) His infinite power. The sea divided its waters at God's command. This was a miracle. What is a miracle? Who only can perform miracles? Why can God only perform miracles? (b) His goodness. Pharaoh with his army set out in pursuit of the Israelites in order to force them back into Egypt and into bondage. But the Israelites cried unto God for help and He again delivered them. What do we call that attribute of God by which He bestows numberless blessings upon all His creatures? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? (c) His justice. Pharaoh and his army met their death by being drowned in the Red Sea, the same death that so many innocent babes of the Israelites were made to endure in the waters of the Nile. The

destruction of Pharaoh was a just punishment also for his pride, his obstinacy, hardheartedness and lack of repentance. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *The Passage through the Waters of the Red Sea is a Figure of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.* The Israelites had to pass through the waters of the Red Sea in order to escape from the bondage of the Egyptians and enter into the Promised Land. It is through the waters of Baptism that we escape from the power of Satan and are made heirs of the promised land — heaven.

E. *Moral Application.*—God did not forget His people in the time of danger, neither will He ever forsake you if you remain faithful to Him.

XXXVI.—THE MIRACLES IN THE DESERT.

A. *Preparation.*—From the Red Sea the Israelites went into the desert, where they received in a miraculous manner food and drink.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The bitter spring. (b) The murmuring of the people for want of food. (c) Quails and manna. (d) The murmuring of the people because of the lack of water. (e) Amalec and his people overcome.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went forth into the wilderness of Sur, and they marched three days through the wilderness, and found no water. And they came into Mara, and they could not drink the waters of Mara, because they were bitter: whereupon Moses gave a suitable name to the place, calling it Mara, that is bitterness. And the people murmured against Moses, saying: What shall we drink? But he cried to the Lord, and he shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were turned into sweetness" (Ex. xv. 22-25). (The water was made sweet; drinking water is called sweet water to distinguish it from the salt water of the ocean.) "And the children of Israel came into Elim, where there were twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees: and they encamped by the waters. And they set forward from Elim, and all the multitude of the children of Israel came into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai: the fifteenth day of the second month, after they came out of the land of Egypt. (b) And all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them: Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat over the flesh pots, and ate bread to the full. Why have you brought us into this desert, that you might destroy all the multitude with famine? (c) And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel: Say to them: In the

evening you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread: and you shall know that I am the Lord, your God. So it came to pass in the evening, that quails coming up, covered the camp: and in the morning a dew lay around about the camp. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: Manhu! which signifieth: what is this! for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them: This is the bread, which the Lord hath given you to eat" (xv. 27; xvi. 1-3, 11-15). Manna is also called heavenly bread because it was sent by God from heaven. The people gathered every day sufficient for the needs of each, but on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion sufficient for the seventh day, for God sent it not on the Sabbath day. "See that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, and for this reason on the sixth day He giveth you a double provision: let each man stay at home, and let none go forth out of his place the seventh day. And the people kept the sabbath on the seventh day" (xvi. 29, 30). (d) "Then all the multitude of the children of Israel setting forward from the desert of Sin, according to the word of the Lord, encamped in Raphidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. And they argued with Moses, and said: Give us water, that we may drink. And Moses answered them: Why find fault with me? Wherefore do you tempt the Lord? So the people were thirsty there for want of water, and murmured against Moses, saying: Why didst thou make us go forth out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our beasts with thirst? And Moses cried to the Lord, saying: What shall I do to this people? Yet a little more and they will stone me. And the Lord said to Moses: Go before the people, and take with thee of the ancients of Israel: and take in thy hand the rod wherewith thou didst strike the river, and go. Behold, I will stand there before thee, upon the rock Horeb: and thou shalt strike the rock, and water shall come out of it that the people may drink. Moses did so before the ancients of Israel: And he called the name of that place Temptation, because the children of Israel there tempted the Lord, saying: Is the Lord among us or not?" (xvii. 1-7). (e) "And Amalec came, and fought against Israel in Raphidim. And Moses said to Josue: Choose out men: And go out and fight against Amalec: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill having the rod of God in my hand. And Josue put Amalec and his people to flight, by the edge of the sword (xvii. 8, 9, 13). Amalec and his people were descendants of Esau; they lived between the Red Sea and Chanaan on the peninsula of Sinai. "Josue" was the leader of the troops. During the whole of the battle Moses lifted his hands in prayer, and when his hands were heavy from weariness "Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands on both sides. And it came to pass that his hands were not weary until sunset" (xvii. 12). That is until the Lord had granted his prayers and won for His people the victory over Amalec. "And Moses built an altar: and called the name thereof, The Lord my Exhaltation" (xvii. 15).

D. Commentary.—1. God's Power and Goodness. God worked numerous miracles in the wilderness. How many and what were they? What is a miracle? Who can perform miracles? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? The miracles in

the wilderness were so many proofs of the love God bore His people. They were blessings He showered upon them. What is that attribute of God by which out of the abundance of His love he bestows numberless blessings upon us and upon all His creatures? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 2. *The Sins against Hope.* God had already given the Israelites so many proofs of His love and power, in Egypt as well as in the wilderness, that when they began to suffer hunger and thirst they should confidently have hoped for His help. Instead they murmured against Moses, and in murmuring against Moses they murmured against God who had led them into the wilderness. They sinned against hope because they did not trust in God. This is the sin of mistrust or lack of confidence in God. What is hope? How do you sin against hope? 3. *Manna a Figure of the Eucharist.* The manna was bread which fell from heaven. Our Saviour in the Holy Eucharist is a living bread descending from heaven. Daily the Israelites ate of the manna. Daily Christ offers Himself to us as our food in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. The manna supplied the place of all other food; the Holy Eucharist is the bread by excellence, and suffices for all the wants of our soul.

E. *Moral Application.*—The way to the Promised Land was through the desert, which was full of privations and hardships. The way to the "promised land of heaven" is through the desert of this life, also filled with privations and sufferings. Bear patiently the ills and sufferings of this life. Think of your Saviour who suffered all for you and who said: "Take up your cross and follow me." If suffering be your portion, repine not, try to bear it cheerfully. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps" (I. Peter ii. 21).

XXXVII.—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

A. *Preparation.*—On their journey through the wilderness the people of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai (see map), where God gave unto them the ten commandments.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Moses on the mount speaks with God. Promise of the people. (b) Preparations for the third day. (c) The giving of the laws. Fear of the people. (d) The sacrifice of Moses. (e) Moses again goes up the mountain.

C. Explanation.—(a) “In the third month of the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, they came into the wilderness of Sinai” (Ex. xix. 1). “And Moses went up to God: and the Lord called unto him from the mountain, and said: Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, how I have carried you upon the wings of eagles, and have taken you to myself. If therefore you will hear my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession above all people: for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation. These are the words thou shalt speak to the children of Israel. Moses called together the elders of the people and declared all the words of the Lord as commanded. And all the people answered together: All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And when Moses had related this to the Lord, the Lord said to him: Lo, now will I come to thee in the darkness of a cloud, that the people may hear me speaking to thee, and may believe thee for ever. (b) And He said to him: Go to thy people, and sanctify them to-day, and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments. And let them be ready against the third day: for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai” (xix. 3-11). The people were to repent of their sins, ask God’s pardon and do penance. “And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared: and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people in the camp feared. And when Moses had brought them forth to meet God from the place of the camp, they stood at the bottom of the mount. And all mount Sinai was on fire, because the Lord was come down upon it. And the Lord spoke all these words: I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. For the Lord wilt not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain. Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be longlived in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house: neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

And all the people saw the flames, and heard the voice and the sound of the trumpet: and being terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off, saying to Moses: Speak thou to us, and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die. And Moses said to the people: Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that the dread of Him might be in you, and you should not sin" (xix. 16-18; xx. 1-20. (d) "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord: and rising in the morning he built an altar at the foot of the mount, and twelve tithes according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, and they offered holocausts, and sacrificed peace victims of calves to the Lord. Then Moses took half of the blood, and put into bowls: and the rest he poured upon the altar. And taking the book of the covenant, he read it in the hearing of the people: and they said: All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do, we will be obedient. And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. (e) And the Lord said to Moses: Come up to me unto the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and the law, and the commandments which I have written: that thou mayst teach them. And when Moses was gone up, a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord dwelt upon Sinai, covering it with a cloud six days: and the seventh day he called him out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a burning fire upon the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses entering into the midst of the cloud, went up into the mountain: and he was there forty days and forty nights" (xxiv. 4-18). "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: See that thou keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generations: that you may know that I am the Lord, who sanctify you. And the Lord when He had ended these words in Mount Sinai, gave to Moses two stone tables of testimony, written with the finger of God" (xxxi. 12, 18). On these two tables of stone were the ten commandments. On the one were the three first commandments relating our duties to God and on the other the remaining seven relating our duties to our neighbor and ourselves. "Written with the finger of God," that is, by His infinite power.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *God's Holiness and Power.* God gave to the Israelites commandments in which were minute instructions as to what they were to do and what they were to avoid. By these commandments, then, is made known the divine will of God. He wills mankind to do what is good and to avoid what is evil because He loves only what is good and hates all that is evil. What do we call this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is holy"? God's almighty power was again shown by the appalling spectacle on Mount Sinai, when all nature contributed to show His greatness. 2. *The Dread Greatness of God.* When the almighty God spoke to the Israelites, they trembled at the foot of Mount

Sinai, and implored Moses to speak to them himself, instead of the Lord, whose majesty they could not sustain. 3. *The Ten Commandments contained the Law*, not only for the Israelites, but for the whole of mankind, including each one of us. The very nature of man impresses the duty of keeping these commands. We must adore and serve God, the Creator of us all. Love, honor and obey our father and mother, our natural, God-given parents. We must not injure our neighbor or ourselves in body or soul. We must not harm the good name or the possessions of our neighbor. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill this the Old Law. That is, the more fully to interpret and to teach it. Why are we Christians, then, obliged to keep this covenant of the Old Law? The old and the new covenant. The old covenant was made, through Moses, with the people of Israel, and Moses confirmed it by sacrifices. The sacrifices which Moses offered to confirm the law of the Lord, as well as all the other sacrifices of the ancient law, were figures of the sacrifice of Christ. The new covenant was made, through Christ, with all people and confirmed by the shedding of His precious blood on the cross. Moses sprinkled blood over all the people; Our Lord having preached the Gospel, gave His adorable blood to His apostles. Moses, in sprinkling the blood of the victim over the people, used these words: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you." Our Lord, in giving His blood to His apostles, pronounced these words: "This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many." The sacrifices of the ancient law were bloody and unbloody; the sacrifice of Our Lord was offered up in a bloody manner on the cross, and is still offered in an unbloody manner on the altar. The sacrifices of the ancient law were offered up for four ends—to adore, to thank, to ask and to expiate; the sacrifice of Our Lord is offered up for the same four ends. Thus the sacrifices of the ancient law are figures of Our Lord's sacrifice.

E. *Moral Application*.—Think of the great majesty and power of God and fear to offend Him. God has threatened with dire punishment those who break His commandments. At night examine your conscience; if you find you have sinned, repent, resolve to amend and go to Confession as soon as possible. God loves a contrite heart and if you have been so unfortunate as to break one of God's commandments, humbly beg His mercy and pardon and show your grief at having offended Him. If you really love God and your

neighbor for love of Him, you will not readily break His commandments. Remember the chief commandments that include all the others. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark xii. 30; Matt. xxii. 37). Also bear in mind the Golden Rule to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

XXXVIII.—THE GOLDEN CALF.

A. *Preparation*.—Although the Israelites had promised faithfully to serve God and keep His commandments, they soon forsook Him and fell into idolatry, worshipping a golden calf.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The golden calf. (b) The righteous anger of Moses. (c) Moses intercedes with God for his people and their sins are forgiven them.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Moses was forty days and forty nights on the mount and the Israelites despaired of his return. "And the people seeing that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, gathering together against Aaron said: Arise, make us gods, that may go before us, for as to this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has befallen him. And Aaron said to them: Take the golden earrings from the ears of your wives, and your sons and daughters, and bring them to me. And the people did what he had commanded, bringing the earrings to Aaron" (Ex. xxxii. 1-3). Aaron demanded of them their most valued belonging (namely, gold), because he hoped they would rather give up their desire of having gods made than their gold. "And when he had received them, he fashioned them by founders' work, and made of them a molten calf. And they said: These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (xxxii. 4, 5). Aaron had fashioned the gold into a calf, to remind them of what they had often seen among the idolatrous Egyptians. "And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it and made proclamation by a crier's voice, saying: To-morrow is the solemnity of the Lord. And the Lord spoke to Moses saying: Get thee down: thy people, which thou has brought out of the land of Egypt, hath sinned. They have quickly strayed from the way which thou didst shew them: and they have made to themselves a molten calf, and have adored it, and sacrificing victims to it have said: These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. (b) And Moses returned from the mount, carrying the two tables of the testimony in his hand, written on both sides, made by the work of God: the writing also of God was graven in the tables. And when he came nigh to the camp, he saw the calf and the dances: and

being very angry, he threw the tables out of his hand, and broke them at the foot of the mount" (xxxii. 7, 19). Moses broke the tables purposely as a sign to the people that they had broken their covenant with God, the law of the ten commandments which they had confirmed. "And laying hold of the calf which they had made, he burnt it to powder, which he threw into water, and gave thereof to the children of Israel to drink. Then standing in the gate of the camp, he said: If any man be on the Lord's side let him join with me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said to them: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword upon his thigh: go and return from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend and neighbor. And the sons of Levi did according to the words of Moses, and there were slain that day about three and twenty thousand men. (c) And when the next day was come Moses spoke to the people: You have sinned a very great sin: I will go up to the Lord, if by any means I may be able to entreat him for your crime. And returning to the Lord, he said I beseech thee: this people hath sinned a heinous sin, and they have made to themselves gods of gold: either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that thou hast written" (xxxii. 12, 26-28, 30-32) (meaning the Book of Life, in which are written the names of those who shall possess heaven.) Moses intended by these words to say: Let all possible evil come upon me, rather than that all thy people should be lost. "And the Lord answered him: He that sinned against me, him will I strike out of my book: But go thou, and lead this people whither I have told thee: My angel shall go before thee. And I in the day of revenge will visit this sin also of theirs" (xxxii. 33, 34).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Idolatry.* Aaron made for the Israelites a calf of gold and built an altar before the same. The people offered sacrifice to the golden calf. To whom alone may we offer sacrifice? The Israelites gave to the golden calf honor due to God alone. What is that sin called by which we give to any creature the honor due to God alone? What is idolatry? 2. *Human Fear.* When the Israelites asked Aaron to make gods for them, he should have rebuked them and refused their request. But he had often seen the wickedness of the people and feared if he angered them by a refusal they might stone him to death. He thus sinned through human fear, and helped the people to fall into idolatry. Thus he was accessory to their sin. What are the nine ways of being accessory to another's sin? 3. *Permissible Killing.* By the fifth commandment God forbids killing. Moses had the idolaters put to death because God had commanded it and he as the chosen leader of the people had to carry out this command. Is it ever allowed to take the life of a human being? 4. *God's Goodness and Mercy.* Although the Israelites had so grievously sinned in breaking the newly confirmed covenant,

falling away from God and into idolatry, God in His infinite goodness and mercy did not forsake them, but granted them pardon when they had acknowledged their sin and done penance. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"?

E. Moral Application.—Never through human respect or human fear fail to carry out God's commands. Remember the words of Christ: "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (x. 28).

XXXIX.—THE TABERNACLE.

A. Preparation.—For forty days and forty nights God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, making known to him His precepts concerning the service due unto Him. We shall now hear how Moses was to build and arrange the temple of the Israelites.

B. Narration.—(a) Offerings prescribed for the building of the tabernacle, the ark, the candlestick. (b) The form of the tabernacle with its appurtenances. (c) The altar and furnishings. (d) Consecration of the tabernacle and vessels.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring firstfruits to me: of every man that offereth of his own accord you shall take them. And these are the things you must take: Gold, and silver, and brass, violet and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, and fine linen and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and violet skins and setim wood: oil to make lights: spices for ointment, and for sweet smelling incense, onyx stones to adorn the ephod. And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them" (Ex. xxv. 1-8). "Setim wood," the wood of a tree that grows in the wilderness which is said to be incorruptible. "The ephod and the rational"; the ephod was the high priest's upper vestment and the rational his breast plate, in which were twelve gems, etc. "And thus you shall make it frame an ark of setim wood, the length whereof shall be of two cubits and a half: the breadth, a cubit and a half: the height, likewise, a cubit and a half. And thou shalt overlay it with purest gold within and without: and over it thou shalt make a golden crown round about and four golden rings, which thou shalt put at the four corners of the ark: let two rings be on one side and two on the other. Thou shalt make bars also of setim wood, and shalt overlay them with gold, and

thou shalt put them in through the rings that are in the sides of the ark, that it may be carried on them. And thou shalt put in the ark the testimony which I will give thee. Thou shalt make also a propitiatory of the purest gold." ("Propitiatory," a covering for the ark, a propitiatory or mercy seat as from thence God showed mercy.) Thou shalt make two cherubims of beaten gold. Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory. Thou shalt make also a candlestick of beaten work of the finest gold. Thou shalt make also seven lamps, and shalt set them upon the candlestick, to give light over against" (xxv. 10-14, 16-18, 20, 31, 37). (b) "And thou shalt make the tabernacle in this manner: thou shalt make ten curtains of fine twisted linen, and violet and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, diversified with embroidery. The length of one curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, the breadth shall be four cubits. All the curtains shall be of one measure. Five curtains shall be joined one to another, and the other five shall be coupled together in like manner. Thou shalt make also fifty rings of gold wherewith the veils of the curtain are to be joined, that it may be made one tabernacle. Thou shalt make also another cover to the roof of rams' skins dyed red; and over that again another cover of violet colored skins. Thou shalt make also the boards of the tabernacle standing upright of setim wood. Thou shalt make also a veil of violet and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, and fine twisted linen, wrought with embroidered work, and goodly variety: And thou shalt hang it up before four pillars of setim wood, which themselves also shall be overlaid with gold, and shall have heads of gold, but sockets of silver. And the veils shall be hanged on with rings, and within it thou shalt put the ark of the testimony, and the sanctuary, and the holy of holies shall be divided with it" (xxvi. 1-33). "The sanctuary," etc., that part of the tabernacle which was without the veil, into which the priests daily entered, is here called *the sanctuary*, or holy place; that part which was within the veil, into which no one but the high priest ever went, and he but once a year, is called the holy of holies, literally the sanctuary of the sanctuaries, as being the most holy of all holy places. "And thou shalt set the propitiatory upon the ark of the testimony, in the holy of holies. And the table without the veil: and over against the table the candlestick in the south side of the tabernacle: for the table shall stand on the north side" (xxvi. 34, 35). "The table" on which were to be placed the twelve loaves of proposition, or, as they are called in the Hebrew, the face bread, because they were always to stand before the face of the Lord in His temple—as a figure of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Sacrament, in the Church of Christ. (c) "Thou shalt make also an altar of setim wood, which shall be five cubits long and as many broad, that is four square and three cubits high. And there shall be horns at the four corners of the same and thou shalt cover it with brass. And thou shalt make for the uses thereof pans to receive the ashes, and tongs and fleshhooks, and fire pans: all its vessels thou shalt make of brass. Thou shalt make also an altar to burn incense, of setim wood" (this burning of incense was an emblem of prayer, ascending to God from an inflamed heart). "Thou shalt make also a brazen laver with its foot, to wash in: and thou shalt set it between the tabernacle of the testimony and the altar. And water being put into it, Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet in it: when they are going into the tabernacle of the testimony, and when they are to come

to the altar, to offer on it incense to the Lord" (that is, the priests were to wash their hands therein) (xxvii. 1-3; xxx. 1, 18-20). (d) "And thou shalt make the holy oil of unction, an ointment compounded after the art of the perfumer, and therewith thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the testimony, and the ark of the testament, and the table with the vessels thereof, the candlestick and furniture thereof, the altars of incense, and of holocaust, and all the furniture that belongeth to the service of them. And thou shalt sanctify all, and they shall be most holy: he that shall touch them shall be sanctified. Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and shalt sanctify them, that they may do the office of priesthood unto me. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: See that thou keep my sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generations: that you may know that I am the Lord, who sanctify you" (xxx. 25-30; xxxi. 12, 13). The cloud covered the tabernacle of the testimony, and the glory of the Lord filled it. For the cloud of the Lord hung over the tabernacle by day, and a fire by night, in the sight of all the children of Israel (xl. 32-36).

D. Commentary.—1. The Tabernacle and its Meaning. There being but one God, so among the Israelites there was but one sanctuary. The tabernacle could be disjoined and carried from place to place during the wanderings of the Israelites. The holy of holies contained the ark of the covenant, which was to remind the people of their covenant with God. It concealed the tables of the law, a vessel containing manna, in memory of God's goodness in the wilderness, and later also the blooming rod of Aaron. The cherubims on the cover of the ark were a sign of God's perpetual protection over Israel. In the sanctuary where the priests were to offer their sacrifice were: (a) The altar of incense, the fragrant scent from which rose as a reminder to the Israelites to lift their hearts to God and preserve their souls in the sweet odor of virtue. (b) The candlestick with its seven lamps was a figure of the light of the Holy Ghost and His sevenfold grace, the ever-burning lights a sign of faith ever living in good works, while the self-consuming flames demonstrated the burning love one should have for God, consuming, if necessary, one's every power and force to serve Him and keep His commandments. (c) The table for the loaves of proposition. To remind the people that every good gift comes from God and incite them to show gratitude. The veil which was to separate the sanctuary from the holy of holies was a reminder that the gates of heaven were still closed by sin. In the forecourt in which the Israelites worshipped stood: (1) The altar of holocaust, which with its bloody sacrifice gave warning to the people that they, through sin, were also deserving of death and should do penance.

(2) The brazen laver was a reminder of the purity of heart with which priest and people should appear before God. 2. *The Tabernacle a Figure of the Catholic Church.* There was but one tabernacle; there is but one true Church. The tabernacle reminded the Israelites of the covenant of the Old Law; the Church reminds us of the true and eternal union of God with us His children. The law is no longer engraved on tables of stone, but in the hearts of the faithful. The ark of the covenant with the manna bears a remarkable likeness to the tabernacle of our altar in which is preserved the true Bread of Heaven, our divine Saviour, in His Sacrament of Love. The pillar of a cloud which covered the tabernacle is a figure of the presence of God in the Catholic Church. Instead of the smoke from the burnt offering in the tabernacle arise the prayers of the faithful in the Church of God, as a sweet odor of incense. The light of the seven-armed candlestick puts us in mind of the light of the gospel of the New Law. The seven arms were a figure of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost and of the seven Sacraments. The table of the loaves of proposition was a figure of the altar in the Catholic Church upon which, under the appearance of bread, Christ daily offers Himself in sacrifice. The altar of holocaust was a figure of the cross upon which the "Lamb of God" shed His precious blood. The brazen laver was a figure of the baptismal font and the confessional, in which, by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, sins are washed away and purity of soul restored; it was also a figure of the vessel in which the priest washes his fingers before the consecration in the Mass and of the holy water font at the entrance of the church of God.

E. *Moral Application.*—Only the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies, and he but once a year. You may enter daily into the very presence of God hidden under the Sacramental veil, in the tabernacles of our altars. Earthly friends may weary of you, you may not always be welcome to their houses, but your Saviour never wearies of you; you are always welcome to enter into His house. Nay, he invites you, He pleads with you to come and visit Him. He is always ready to listen to all your joys, to all your sorrows; go to Him then often, never pass His house, the church, without entering, if only to say "Good day, my Jesus!" Think of Him so often alone and forsaken in the great Sacrament of His love.

XL.—THE HIGH PRIEST. THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

A. *Preparation*.—For the service of God in the tabernacle one of the twelve tribes of Israel was destined, according to God's command. The head or first priest was called the high priest. In their sacred services the priests were aided by the Levites.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Election of the tribe of Levi. (b) Consecration of the priests and Levites. (c) Vestments of the high priests and the priests.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Each of the twelve sons of Jacob had branched out, through his descendants, into numerous families. The descendants of each son therefore formed a tribe; one of these tribes, that of Levi, was chosen by God for the priesthood. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Bring the tribe of Levi, and make them stand in the sight of Aaron, the priest, to minister to him, and let them keep the vessels of the tabernacle, serving in the ministry thereof. And thou shalt give the Levites for a gift, to Aaron and to his sons, to whom they are delivered by the children of Israel. But thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons over the service of priesthood. I have taken the Levites from the children of Israel. For every firstborn among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. For every firstborn is mine, since I struck the firstborn in the land of Egypt: I have sanctified to myself whatsoever is firstborn in Israel both of man and beast, they are mine, I am the Lord" (Num. iii. 5-13). The firstborn male child was consecrated to the priesthood and the firstborn of beast offered in sacrifice. (b) (1) And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the Levites out of the midst of the children of Israel and thou shalt purify them, according to this rite: Let them be sprinkled with the water of purification (the water from the brazen laver in the forecourt). And when the Levites are before the Lord, the children of Israel shall put their hands upon them: And Aaron shall offer the Levites, as a gift in the sight of the Lord from the children of Israel, that they may serve in His ministry. And thou shalt set the Levites in the sight of Aaron and of his sons and shalt consecrate them. (2) And Moses did as the Lord had commanded. And all the multitude being gathered together before the door of the tabernacle, immediately he offered Aaron and his sons: And then he vested the high priest. He took also the oil of unction and poured it upon Aaron's head, and he anointed and consecrated him. And after he had offered his sons he vested them. And taking the ointment, and the blood that was upon the altar, he sprinkled Aaron and his vestments, and his sons and their vestments with it" (Lev. viii. 4-30). (c) "And these shall be the vestments that they shall make: a rational and an ephod, a tunic and a straight linen garment, a mitre and a girdle" (Ex. xxviii. 4). "The rational," this part of the priest's attire, he wore at his breast; it was called the rational of judgment because it admonished both priests and people of

their duty to God, as upon it were engraved the names of all their tribes. The vestments consisted of (1) a white linen garment, (2) a girdle, (3) a white head dress (alb, cincture and amice of the priest of the New Law). There was also the mitre (still used by the bishops of the New Law), which signifies the royalty of the priesthood. "And Moses did as the Lord had commanded. He vested the high priest with the straight linen garment, girding him with the girdle and putting on him the violet tunic, and over it the ephod, and binding it with the girdle, he fitted it to the rational. He put also the mitre upon his head, and upon the mitre over the forehead he put the plate of gold" (Lev. viii. 4, 7-9).

D. *Commentary.*—*The Tribe of Levi was Chosen According to God's Will for the Priestly Office because it did not take part in the Dread Sin of Idolatry* (the worship of the golden calf). (a) The priesthood in the Old Law. The high priest was God's representative on earth, the spiritual head of the people of Israel and their mediator with God. The priests offered the daily sacrifice in the tabernacle, kept the seven lamps of the candlestick burning, and gave the blessing to the people congregated in the forecourt. The Levites helped the priests in their sacred duties, kept watch over the tabernacle, carried the separate parts of the tabernacle of the testimony as well as the sacred vessels (with the exception of the ark of the covenant) on the journeyings of the Israelites, and attended to the cleansing of the tabernacle. (b) *The Priests of the Old Law Figures of the Priests of the New Law.* The high priests and Levites are figures in the Old Law of the Pope; bishops, priests and their servers of the New Law.

E. *Moral Application.*—The priesthood of the New Law was also instituted by God. Always cherish a great reverence for the Holy Father the Pope, for the bishops and the priests of God. They are set over you by God's decree and it is their duty to instruct you and to lead you to eternal salvation. Obey them, because to them Christ said: "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 16).

XLI.—THE SACRIFICE OF THE OLD LAW.

A. *Preparation.*—According to the will of God the priests were to offer daily sacrifice to Him.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Bloody sacrifices. (b) Unbloody sacrifices. (c) The daily sacrifice.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “Speak to the children of Israel and thou shalt say to them: The man among you that shall offer to the Lord a sacrifice of the cattle, that is, offering victims of oxen and sheep, if his offering be a holocaust, and of the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish, at the door of the testimony to make the Lord favorable to him: And he shall immolate the calf before the Lord, and the priests, the sons of Aaron shall offer the blood thereof, pouring it round about the altar, which is before the door of the tabernacle. (b) When any one shall offer an oblation of sacrifice to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense, and shall bring it to the sons of Aaron, the priest: and one of them shall put up a memorial upon the altar for a most sweet savor to the Lord. And whatsoever is left shall be Aaron’s and his sons, holy of holies of the offerings of the Lord. Every oblation that is offered to the Lord shall be made without leaven, neither shall any leaven or honey be burnt in the sacrifice to the Lord. (No leaven or honey was to be used in the sacrifice offered to God: to signify that we are to exclude from the pure worship of the Gospel all double dealing and affection to carnal pleasures. Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest, thou shalt season it with salt, neither shalt thou take away the salt of the covenant of thy God from thy sacrifice. In all thy oblations thou shalt offer salt. (Salt was to be used as an emblem of wisdom and discretion, without which none of our performances are agreeable to God, and because salt is an emblem of purity, as it prevents corruption.) And they shall offer of the sacrifice of peace offerings, for an oblation to the Lord” (Lev. i. 2, 3, 5; ii. 1, 2, 10, 11, 13; iii. 3). (Such sacrifices as were offered either on occasion of blessing received or to obtain new favors. In these some part of the victim was consumed with fire on the altar of God; other parts were eaten by the priests and by the persons for whom the sacrifice was offered. There were also offerings for sin, Sacrifices then were offered to God for four different ends or intentions: 1. By way of adoration, homage, praise and glory due to His divine majesty. 2. By way of thanksgiving for all benefits received from Him. 3. By way of confessing and craving pardon for sins. 4. By way of prayer and petition for grace and relief in all necessities.) (c) “All that I have commanded thee thou shalt do unto Aaron and his sons. Seven days shalt thou consecrate their hands: And thou shalt offer a calf for sin every day for expiation. Seven days shalt thou expiate the altar and sanctify it, and it shall be most holy. Every one that shall touch it shall be holy. This is what thou shalt sacrifice upon the altar: Two lambs of a year old every day continually” (Ex. xxix. 35-38).

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Sacrifice is the Oldest and Most Perfect Way of Showing Honor to God.* God is the possessor of every created thing. To man is only given the use of the things created. The one offering sacrifice in the Old Law chose the best of that over which he had charge and brought before God, offering it up in acknowledgment that God was the absolute master of the life and death of all creatures. In offering sacrifice to God we

acknowledge God's supreme dominion over all things and our entire dependence on Him. What is a sacrifice? Sacrifice is as old as mankind. The sons of Adam (Cain and Abel) offered as they undoubtedly had learned from their parents. Of what other sacrifices have we learned? From now on sacrifices are strictly ordained by God. Have there been sacrifices at all times therefore?

2. *The Sacrifices of the Old Law were Figures of the Sacrifice of the New Law.* As in the Old Law there were bloody and unbloody sacrifices, so also in the New Law do we find a bloody sacrifice—the sacrifice of Christ on the cross—and an unbloody sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Mass. The partaking of that which was offered in the peace sacrifice of the Old Law was a figure of Holy Communion in the New Law. The animals and other creatures sacrificed to God in the Old Law were to be by God's command without a blemish. So in the New Law the Lamb of Sacrifice, Christ Jesus, is without spot or stain, and the offerings, the appearance of bread and wine, are a “clean oblation.” The daily sacrifice of the Old Law pointed to the perpetual daily sacrifice of the New Law. “From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation” (Mal. i. 11). Therefore the sacrifices of the Old Law were but symbols or figures of the sacrifice of the New Law. Why were the sacrifices of the Old Law abolished? What is the sacrifice of the New Law?

E. *Moral Application.*—The Israelites showed the greatest attention and respect when present at their sacrifices; yet their sacrifices were but figures of that great sacrifice which we have the privilege, the honor, of attending. Have the greatest reverence for the sacrifice of the Mass; there is no act so holy, so pleasing to God, so rich in graces and blessings. Think of that loving Saviour who offered Himself up for us on the cross; think of His suffering, His dreadful agony. You were not there to console Him then; but now, when He offers Himself daily in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, you can show your love for Him by the greatest respect and devotion whenever you have the happiness of being present at Mass.

XLII.—FEASTS AND HOLY SEASONS.

A. *Preparation.*—According to God's command certain days and seasons should be deemed especially holy by the Israelites, and these feasts were to be celebrated with great solemnity.

B. Narration.—(a) The three principal feasts. (b) The day of atonement. (c) The Sabbath year and jubilee.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: These are the feasts of the Lord, which you shall call holy. Six days shall ye do work: the seventh day, because it is the rest of the sabbath, shall be called holy. You shall do no work on that day: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your habitations. These also are the holy days of the Lord, which you must celebrate in their seasons: The first month, the fourteenth day of the month at evening, is the phase of the Lord (the Easter or Pasch): And the fifteenth day of the same month is the solemnity of the unleavened bread of the Lord. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread. The first day shall be most solemn unto you, and holy: you shall do no servile work thereon. You shall count therefore from the morrow after the sabbath, wherein you offered the sheaf of the firstfruits, seven full weeks, that is to say fifty days, and so you shall offer a new sacrifice to the Lord. And you shall offer with the loaves seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one calf from the herd and two rams, and they shall be for a holocaust with their libations for a most sweet odor to the Lord. You shall offer also a buck goat for sin, and two lambs of the first year for sacrifices of peace offerings. And when the priest hath lifted them up with the loaves of the firstfruits before the Lord they shall fall to his use. And you shall call this day most solemn, and most holy. You shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. xxiii. 1-7, 15, 16, 18-21). "Three times in a year shall all thy males (from twelve years old and upward) appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles" (Deut. xvi. 16). (b) "Upon the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the day of atonement, it shall be most solemn, and shall be called holy: and you shall afflict your souls on that day and shall offer a holocaust to the Lord. You shall do no servile work in the time of this day, because it is a day of propitiation, that the Lord, your God, may be merciful unto you." The high priest entered the holy of holies, the only time in the entire year, on this day. (c) "Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: when you shall have entered into the land which I will give you observe the rest of the sabbath to the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and shalt gather the fruits thereof: But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath to the land, of the resting of the Lord: thou shalt not sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard. Thou shalt also number to thee seven weeks of years, that is to say seven times seven, which together maketh forty-nine years. And thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land: for it is the year of jubilee. Every one shall return to his possession and every one shall go back to his former family" (xxiii. 27, 28; xxv. 2-4, 8, 10).

D. Commentary.—The Jewish feasts were figures of the Chris-

tian feasts. As the Israelites celebrated three great feasts (the Day of Atonement was not a feast, but a day of fasting and prayer), so in the Catholic Church are celebrated three great feasts—Easter, Pentecost and Corpus Christi—of which the Feast of Tabernacles was a figure. The Day of Atonement was a symbol of our Good Friday, upon which Christ died for the sins, not of one people but of all mankind. Which is the first commandment of the Church? What does the Church command by this first commandment?

E. *Moral Application*.—Never be tempted to miss Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Enter into the spirit of the feasts. Try also to assist at High Mass and listen attentively to the sermon or instruction; for “he that is of God heareth the words of God” (John viii. 47). Also make it a point not to lose benediction without good cause. What more beautiful way to sanctify the day than by receiving a blessing from the loving hands of your Saviour hidden in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.

XLIII.—THE SPIES.

A. *Preparation*.—For about one year the Israelites remained at Sinai, then they continued their march toward the Promised Land; when on the borders of the same they sent out men to view the land.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The lies of the spies. The people murmur. (b) Moses intercedes with God for the people. Sudden death of the spies. (c) The disobedience and defeat of the people.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Send men to view the land of Chanaan, which I will give to the children of Israel, one of every tribe of the rulers. And Moses sent them, and said to them: View the land, see what sort it is: and the people that are the inhabitants thereof, whether they be strong or weak: few in number or many” (Num. xiii. 2, 3, 18, 19). These men then were sent out to find the nature of the inhabitants and of the land in order to know whether or not it would be easy to conquer. “And they that went to spy out the land returned after forty days, having gone round all the country, and came to Moses and Aaron and to all the assembly of the children of Israel to the desert of Pharan, which is in Cades (see map). And speaking to them and to all the multitude, they shewed them the fruits of the land: And they related and said: We came into the land to which thou sentest us, which in very deed floweth with milk and honey (meaning a very fruitful land) as may be known by these fruits: But it hath very strong inhabitants, and the cities are great and walled.

Wherefore the whole multitude crying wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying: Would God that we had died in Egypt and would God we may die in this vast wilderness, and that the Lord may not bring us into this land, lest we fall by the sword, and our wives and children be led away captives. Is it not better to return into Egypt? But Josue, the son of Hun, and Caleb, the son of Jephone, who of themselves also had viewed the land, rent their garments (to show their contrition for having lied to the people) and said to all the multitude of the children of Israel: The land which we have gone round is very good: If the Lord be favorable, He will bring us into it, and give us a land flowing with milk and honey. Be not rebellious against the Lord and fear ye not the people of this land, for we are able to eat them up as bread. All aid is gone from them: the Lord is with us, fear ye not. And when all the multitude cried out, and would have stoned them, the glory of the Lord appeared over the tabernacle of the covenant to all the children of Israel. (b) And the Lord said to Moses: How long will this people detract me? How long will they not believe me for all the signs that I have brought before them? I will strike them therefore with pestilence, and will consume them: but thee I will make a ruler over a great nation, and a mightier than this is. And Moses said to the Lord: Forgive, I beseech thee, the sins of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, as thou hast been merciful to them from their going out of Egypt unto this place. And the Lord said: I have forgiven according to thy word. But yet all the men that have seen my majesty, and the signs that I have done in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now ten times, and have not obeyed my voice, shall not see the land. Say therefore to them: In the wilderness shall your carcasses lie. All you that were numbered from twenty years old and upward, and have murmured against me." That is, those of God's chosen people over the age of twenty who after all the signs and wonders He had shown unto them still murmured against and mistrusted Him, should never enter the Promised Land, but all of those under twenty should yet enter into it. "Therefore all the men, whom Moses had sent to view the land, and who at their return had made the whole multitude to murmur against him, speaking ill of the land that it was naught, died and were struck in the sight of the Lord. But Josue and Caleb lived, of all them that had gone to view the land." The ten who did not repent were struck dead, but the two who, confessing their lie, repented were forgiven. (c) "And Moses spoke all these words to all the children of Israel. And behold rising up very early in the morning, they went up to the top of the mountain and said: We are ready to go up to the place of which the Lord hath spoken: For we have sinned. And Moses said to them: Go not up, for the Lord is not with you: lest you fall before your enemies. But they being blinded went up to the top of the mountain. But the ark of the testament of the Lord and Moses departed not from the camp. And the Amalecite came down and the Chanaanite that dwelt in the mountain: and hunting and slaying them pursued them as far as Horma (see map)" (xiv. 26, 44, 45). The people, puffed up with pride, thought they could enter the Promised Land without God's help, disobeying Him, for He had said through Moses that they were never to enter the land

of Chanaan; they attempted to enter and were overcome, slain and pursued by the Chanaanites.

D. Commentary.—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His justice. The unbelieving and embittered people wished to stone to death the two spies, Josue and Caleb, after they had confessed their lie. They also murmured against God and against Moses because they had been led out of Egypt. Therefore God punished them by forbidding their entrance into the Promised Land. When they attempted an entrance against God's will they suffered a dreadful defeat. This was a well-merited punishment (also the punishment of the ten unrepentant spies). What is this attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked according to their deserts? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? (b) His mercy. The race of Israel deserved to be removed from the earth, but Moses interceded and God again forgave them. He showed them mercy. What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? 2. *The Sins of the People.* (a) God had so often shown His power and His goodness to the Israelites (when He led them out of bondage, and in the manifold blessings bestowed upon them during their sojourn in the wilderness) that they should have remained firm in their confidence and belief in Him when the ten messengers returned and cried down the land to mislead the people. The Israelites sinned against faith and against hope. (First commandment.) How do we sin against faith? How do we sin against hope? The people cried out against God. They became angry and spoke of Him with contempt, that is, blasphemed. Therefore God said to Moses: "How long will this people detract me?" (Second commandment.) What is blaspheming? Do we commit sin by blasphemous thoughts? The people wished that they might die in the wilderness, saying: "Would God we may die in this vast wilderness!" They wished, therefore, evil to themselves. This is called cursing. What is cursing? When Josue and Caleb acknowledged their guilt and tried to appease the people, the latter became more angry and wished to stone them to death. (Fifth commandment.) What does God forbid by this fifth commandment? What does God command by the fifth commandment? 3. *The Sins of the Spies.* (a) Lying. The messengers cried down the land of Chanaan, stating that the people would be crushed by the strong inhabitants of the same. This was a deliberate and intentional denial of the truth. What is meant by a lie? (b) Scandal. By

their lies the messengers incited the people to doubt and mistrust God and to do all the above-mentioned sins. When we incite, advise or help our neighbor to do evil, we scandalize him. (Fifth commandment.) When do we injure our neighbor spiritually? When do we scandalize our neighbor? Is scandal a great sin?

E. Moral Application.—Detest lying from the bottom of your heart. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xii. 22). God often severely punishes lies even in this world. The sudden deaths of the ten unrepentant spies is an example. There is something so contemptible, so shameful about a lie that man's nature revolts. Love truth and avoid everything that seeks to hide the truth. Avoid the slightest prevarication or exaggeration. If lying lips are an abomination, truthful lips must be beautiful in the sight of God.

XLIV.—THE SABBATH BREAKER. THE SCHISM OF CORE. AARON'S ROD.

A. Preparation.—While the Israelites still journeyed in the wilderness it chanced that one of their number was caught breaking the Sabbath. How he as well as some who revolted against Moses, Aaron and the priesthood were punished we shall see in to-day's lesson.

B. Narration.—(a) The punishment of the Sabbath breaker. (b) The schism of Core and his adherents; their punishment. (c) The rod of Aaron.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness and had found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day, that they brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole multitude. And they put him into prison, not knowing what they should do with him. And the Lord said to Moses: Let that man die, let all the multitude stone him without the camp. And when they had brought him out, they stoned him, and he died as the Lord had commanded. (b) And behold Core, the son of Isaar, the son of Caath, the son of Levi, and Datham and Abiron, the sons of Eliab (of the tribe of Ruben), and Hon, the son of Pheleth, of the children of Ruben, rose up against Moses, and with them two hundred and fifty others of the children of Israel, leading men of the synagogue. And when they had stood up against Moses and Aaron, they said: Let it be enough for you, that all the multitude consisteth of holy ones, and the Lord is among them." That is, they considered that all alike were holy and consecrated to the Lord, not alone the tribe of Levi. "Why lift you up yourselves above the people of the Lord?" Meaning why should Moses and Aaron

consider themselves as holding higher places before God. "When Moses heard this he fell flat on his face and speaking to Core and all the multitude, he said: In the morning the Lord will make known who belong to Him, and the holy He will join to Himself: and whom He shall choose they shall approach to Him. Then Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiron, the sons of Eliab. But they answered: we will not come. Is it a small matter to thee, that thou hast brought us out of a land that flowed with milk and honey, to kill us in the desert, but that thou must rule also like a lord over us?" Thus revolting against Moses, and the authorized priesthood, they also indirectly revolted against God. "Moses therefore being very angry (this anger was a zeal against sin, and an indignation at the affront offered to God) said to the Lord: Respect not their sacrifices. And he said to Core: Do thou and thy congregation stand apart before the Lord to-morrow and Aaron apart. Take every one of you censers, and put incense upon them, offering to the Lord. When they had done this, and had drawn up all the multitude against them to the door of the tabernacle, the glory of the Lord appeared to them all. And the Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron said: Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may presently destroy them. Command the whole people to separate themselves from the tents of Core and Dathan and Abiron. And Moses said: By this you shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all things that you see. If these men die the common death of men, the Lord did not send me. But if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth opening her mouth swallow them down, and all things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord. And immediately, as he had made an end of speaking, the earth broke asunder under their feet: And opening her mouth devoured them with their tents, and all their substance. And they went down alive into hell, the ground closing upon them, and they perished from among the people" (Num. xvi. 1-33). The crime of these men which was punished in so remarkable a manner was that of schism, and of rebellion against the authority established by God in the Church, while usurping the priesthood without being lawfully called and sent; the same is the case of all modern sectaries. (c) "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod by their kindreds, of all the princes of the tribes, twelve rods, and write the name of every man upon his rod. And the name of Aaron shall be for the tribe of Levi, and one rod shall contain all their families (these rods were rods or switches from the almond tree). And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the covenant before the testimony, where I will speak to thee. Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom: And I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, wherewith they murmur against you. And when Moses had laid them up before the Lord in the tabernacle of the testimony: He returned on the following day, and found that the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, had budded: and that the buds swelling it had bloomed blossoms, which spreading the leaves, were formed into almonds. Moses therefore brought out all the rods from before the Lord to all the children of Israel: And they saw and every one received their rods. And the Lord said to Moses: Carry back the rod of Aaron into

the tabernacle of the testimony, that it may be kept there for a token of the rebellious children of Israel, and that their complaints may cease from me lest they die" (xvii. 1-10). Through this miracle God proved that the priesthood was instituted by Him—that it was a divine institution.

D. Commentary.—**1. God's Justice and Power.** These were shown in the punishment meted out to the Sabbath breaker and in that of Core and his followers. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? God worked a great miracle when in one night He caused the rod of Aaron to bud, blossom and bear fruit. To whom alone can miracles be ascribed? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? **2. The Desecration of the Sabbath.** According to God's command the man found breaking the Sabbath was punished by death. The severity of this punishment shows us what a serious sin is the desecration of the Sabbath (Sunday). To-day as well as in the past the breaking of the Sabbath is followed by severe punishment, if not in time then certainly in eternity. Remember, then, to keep holy the Sabbath day. What does God command by the third commandment? Why do we keep the Sunday instead of the Sabbath? How should we keep Sunday holy? What is strictly forbidden on Sunday? **3. The Sin of Core and His Followers.** (a) **Pride.** Core and his fellow schismatics wished to be, like Aaron and his sons, priests of the Lord. But as the priesthood was instituted by God, and those to serve Him in it chosen by Him, they wrongfully aspired to what was not their right; they arose in their pride and no longer gave to God the honor due to Him. They refused to submit to His holy will. They treated Moses and Aaron, who were placed over them by God, with contempt, rebelling against their authority. They therefore committed the sin of blasphemy (what is blasphemy?) and the sin of pride. When do we sin by pride? (b) **The schism.** Moses and Aaron were the spiritual as well as temporal governors of the people, being chosen by God to carry out His laws. Core and his followers refused to obey them longer. Against which commandment did they sin in this? What does God command by the fourth commandment? Do we owe special honor, love and obedience to any others besides our parents? From whom do spiritual and temporal superiors derive their authority?

E. Moral Application.—Remember the dreadful punishment meted out to Core and to those who rebelled with him. Honor, love and obey your parents, pastors and teachers. "Honor thy father

and thy mother, which is the only commandment with a promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long lived upon earth" (Eph. vi. 2, 3). Always show proper respect and submission to priests, as the representatives of God and the dispensers of His holy mysteries.

XLV.—THE DOUBTING OF MOSES AND OF AARON. THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

A. Preparation.—After forty years of wandering in the wilderness even Moses and Aaron so far forgot themselves as to doubt, upon one occasion, God's mercy. The people again murmured against God and were punished by fiery serpents. Having repented their sins they were miraculously saved by God.

B. Narration.—(a) The doubting of Moses and of Aaron and their punishment. (b) The brazen serpent.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the people wanting water came together against Moses and Aaron: And making a sedition said: Would God we had perished among our brethren before the Lord. And Moses and Aaron, leaving the multitude, went into the tabernacle of the covenant, and fell flat upon the ground, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that being satisfied, they may cease to murmur. And the glory of the Lord appeared over them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the rod, and assemble the people together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak to the rock before them, and it shall yield water. And when thou hast brought forth water out of the rock, all the multitude and their cattle shall drink. Moses therefore took the rod, which was before the Lord, as he had commanded him, and having gathered together the multitude before the rock, he said to them: Hear, ye rebellious and incredulous: Can we bring you forth water out of this rock? And when Moses had lifted up his hand, and struck the rock twice with the rod, there came forth water in great abundance, so that the people and their cattle drank. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: Because you have not believed me, to sanctify me before the children of Israel, you shall not bring these people into the land, which I will give them." The fault of Moses and Aaron, on this occasion, was a certain diffidence and weakness of faith; not doubting of God's power or veracity, but apprehending the unworthiness of that rebellious and incredulous people, they doubted if God would again show mercy and help them. (b) "And when they had removed the camp from Cades, they came to Mount Hor (southeast of Cades), which is in the borders of the land of Edom: where the Lord spoke to Moses: Let Aaron, saith he, go to his people: for he shall not go into the land which I have given the children of

Israel, because he was incredulous to my words. Take Aaron and his son with him, and bring them up into Mount Hor: And when thou hast stripped the father of his vesture, thou shalt vest therewith Eleazar his son: Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there. Moses did as the Lord had commanded: And they went up into Mount Hor before all the multitude. And when he had stripped Aaron of his vestments, he vested Eleazar his son with them. And Aaron being dead in the top of the mountain he came down with Eleazar. And all the multitude seeing that Aaron was dead, mourned for him thirty days throughout all their families." Aaron died at the age of 123 years (Num. xx. 2-30). "And they marched from Mount Hor by the way that leadeth to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom. And the people began to be weary of their journey and labour: And speaking against God and Moses, they said: Why didst thou bring us out of the land of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, nor have we any waters, our soul now loatheth this very light food (so they called the heavenly manna; thus worldlings loath the things of heaven, for which they have no relish). Wherefore the Lord sent among the people fiery serpents, which bit them and killed many of them." "Fiery serpents"—so called because they that were bitten by them were burned with a violent heat. "Upon which they came to Moses, and said: We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee: pray that he may take away these serpents from us: And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: Whosoever being struck shall look on it shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: and all that looked upon it were healed" (xxi. 4-9).

D. Commentary.—1. God's Faithfulness, Justice and Power.

(a) His faithfulness. Aaron's death; he did not enter into the Promised Land. (b) His justice. Punishment of Moses and Aaron for having doubted and of the Israelites for having murmured against God. (c) His power. Water coming out of the rock.

2. *Doubts against Faith.* God had expressly said to Moses and Aaron: "Speak to the rock and it shall yield water." With strong faith in these divine words they should have given water from out of the rock to the people; instead, at the moment they had gathered the people before the rock they doubted God's mercy, saying: "Can we bring you forth water out of this rock?" They thus sinned against the absolute faith we owe to God. What is the Christian virtue of faith? Why must we take as true what God has said or revealed? How do we sin against faith? (First commandment.) 3. *Purpose of Earthly Sufferings.* The Israelites murmured against God; therefore God sent fiery serpents among them. The nation realized its sin, repented and asked for pardon and mercy. God therefore sends physical evils into this world, that the sinner may mend his ways and not be forever lost. If God

takes care of all things, why is there so much suffering? 4. *The Brazen Serpent a Figure of Christ.* The guilty Israelites were bitten by serpents, which caused their death. The human race, guilty in the person of Adam, has been bitten by the infernal serpent, which causes death to the soul. The brazen serpent was made and put in a conspicuous place; Our Lord became man and was elevated on the cross. Those who looked with faith on the brazen serpent were healed from the bites of the fiery serpents; all who look on Our Lord with faith and love are cured of the wounds inflicted by the infernal serpent. Nothing but the sight of the brazen serpent could cure the bite of the serpents; nothing but faith and love of Our Lord can cure the wounds which the devil inflicts on our souls.

E. *Moral Application.*—Fly from sin as you would from the deadliest serpent. A poisonous serpent may cause death to the body; sin may cause eternal death to the soul. Find out which is your predominant sin, that is, the one you most often commit, and make a strong resolution to most carefully avoid this as well as every other sin. Every morning, on arising, beg God to preserve you from sin throughout the day; call upon your guardian angel to aid you and keep you from falling into sin.

XLVI.—BALAAM'S PROPHECY.

A. *Preparation.*—The Israelites conquered the surrounding country east of the Promised Land. One of the kings of the conquered country wished to have the people cursed by a prophet, thinking that he would then more readily regain the land. Instead, the prophet gave his blessing to the people and prophesied good things to them.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Israel's conquests. Balaam's blessing. (b) Balaam's prophecy.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And Israel sent messengers to Sehon, king of the Amorrites. And he would not grant that Israel should pass by his borders: but rather gathering an army went forth to meet them in the desert, and came to Jasa, and fought against them. And he was slain by them with the edge of the sword, and they possessed his land from the Arnon unto the Jabbok, and to the confines of the children of Ammon: for the borders of the Ammonites were kept with a strong garrison. (Arnon and Jabbok rivers, see map.) So Israel took all his cities, and dwelt in the cities of the Amorrite, to wit in Hesebon, and in the villages thereof. And Moses sent some to take a

view of Jazer: and they took the villages of it, and conquered the inhabitants. And they turned themselves, and went up by the way of Basan, and Og the king of Basan came against them with all his people, to fight in Edrai. So they slew him also with his sons and all his people, not letting any one escape, and they possessed his land" (Num. xxi. 21-35). And they went forward and encamped in the plains of Moab, over against where Jericho is situated beyond the Jordan. And Balac the son of Sephor, seeing all that Israel had done to the Amorrhite, and that the Moabites were in great fear of him, and were not able to sustain his assault (the land of Balac, king of the Moabites, lay to the east of the Dead Sea), sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, a soothsayer, who dwelt by the river of the land of the children of Ammon to call him, and to say: Behold a people is come out of Egypt, that hath covered the face of the earth, sitting over against me. Come therefore, and curse this people, because it is mightier than I: if by any means I may beat them and drive them out of my land: for I know that he whom thou shalt bless is blessed, and he whom thou shalt curse is cursed. He answered: Tarry here this night, and I will answer whatsoever the Lord shall say to me. And God said to Balaam: Thou shalt not go with them nor shalt thou curse the people: because it is blessed. The princes returning, said to Balac: Balaam would not come with us. Then he sent many more and more noble than before. Balaam answered: If Balac would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot alter the word of the Lord my God, to speak either more or less. I pray you to stay here this night also, that I may know what the Lord will answer me once more." By desiring them to stay, after he had been fully informed already that it was not God's will he should go, he gave way to the inclination he had to gratify Balac for the sake of wordly gain. God punished his perverse disposition by permitting him to go (though not to curse the people as he would have willingly done), and suffering him to fall still deeper and deeper into sin, till he came at last to give that abominable counsel against the people of God, which ended in his own destruction. So sad a thing it is to indulge a passion for money! "God therefore came to Balaam in the night and said to him: If these men come to call thee, arise and go with them: yet so, that thou do what I shall command thee. Balaam arose in the morning and saddling his ass went with them. And God was angry. And an angel of the Lord stood in the way against Balaam, who sat on the ass and had two servants with him. The ass seeing the angel standing in the way, with a drawn sword, turned herself out of the way and went into the field. And when Balaam beat her, and had a mind to bring her again to the way, the angel stood in a narrow place between two walls, wherewith the vineyards were enclosed. And the ass seeing him, thrust herself close to the wall, and bruised the foot of the rider, but he beat her again. And when the ass saw the angel standing she fell under the feet of the rider: who being angry beat her sides more vehemently with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass (the angel moved the tongue of the ass, to utter these speeches, to rebuke, by the mouth of a brute beast, the brutal fury and folly of Balaam) and she said: What have I done to thee? Why strikest thou me, lo, now this third time? Balaam answered: Because thou hast deserved it, and hast served me ill: I would I had a sword

that I might kill thee. The ass said: Am not I thy beast on which thou hast been always accustomed to ride until this present day? Tell me if I ever did the like thing to thee? But he said: Never. Forthwith the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel standing in the way with a drawn sword, and he worshipped him, falling flat on the ground. The angel said: Go with these men, and see thou speak no other thing than what I shall command thee. He went therefore with the princes. And when Balac heard of it he came forth to meet him in a town of the Moabites, that is situated in the uttermost borders of Arnon. So they went on together, and came into a city that was in the uttermost borders of his kingdom. And Balaam said to Balac: Stand awhile by the burnt offering, until I go to see if perhaps the Lord will meet me, and whatsoever he shall command, I will speak to thee. And the Lord put the word in his mouth, and said: Return to Balac, and thus shalt thou speak. And taking up his parable, he said: Balac, king of the Moabites, hath brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east: Come, said he, and curse Jacob: make haste and detest Israel. How shall I curse him whom God hath not cursed? By what means should I detest him whom the Lord detesteth not? I shall see him from the tops of the rocks, and shall consider him from the hills. This people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob and know the number of the stock of Israel? Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them. I was brought to bless the blessing I will not hinder. The Lord his God is with him, and the sound of the victory of the king in him. (b) Behold the people shall rise up as a lioness, and shall lift itself up as a lion: The hearer of the words of God (the words God made known to Balaam) hath said, who knoweth the doctrine of the Highest, and seeth the visions of the Almighty, who falling hath his eyes opened: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him but not near (only in the distant future). A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel (from one of the descendants of Jacob): And shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth" (meaning by this all the pagan peoples) (xxii. 1-39; xxiii. 3-24; xxiv. 16, 17).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *God's Power and Omniscience.* God forced Balaam, against his will, to bless the people of Israel. Which attribute of God did this show? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? God made the future known to Balaam. Who alone can know what the future will bring forth? What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? 2. *The Prophecy of the Messias.* Balaam prophesied that in the distant future one would come, who would rise like a star, who would be the prince of princes, and that He would overcome all pagan peoples. "A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre spring up from Israel: and shall strike the chiefs of Moab." This prophecy foretold the coming of the Saviour. He came from the chosen people, Israel, about 1450 years after Balaam, and shone

like a bright star before men, enlightening all mankind. He established His kingdom on earth—the Church. He overcame and still overcomes the pagans, bringing them into the one, true Christian fold.

E. *Moral Application*.—God prevented Balaam from cursing the people of Israel. God, being all-holy, loves and wills only what is good. Most carefully guard against the sinful and shameful habit of cursing and swearing. Never defile, by evil words, the lips that speak to God in prayer and receive the sacred body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

XLVII.—MOSES' LAST EXHORTATION AND HIS DEATH.

A. *Preparation*.—The time came when Moses was to die. Before his death he most beautifully admonished the chosen people whom he had led through the wilderness.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Moses' last admonition. (b) His death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Consider that I have set before thee this day life and good, and on the other hand death and evil: That thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways and keep his commandments and ceremonies and judgments, and thou mayst live, and he may multiply thee and bless thee in the land, which thou shalt possess. But if thy heart be turned away, so that thou wilt not hear, and being deceived with error thou adore strange gods and serve them (the false gods of the pagan Chanaanites): I foretell thee this day that thou shalt perish, and shalt remain but a short time in the land, to which thou shalt pass over the Jordan, and shalt go in to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." It was for them to make their choice, but he exhorted them, saying: "Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live: And that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and obey his voice, and adhere to him for he is thy life and the length of thy days that thou mayst dwell in the land, for which the Lord swore to thy fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he would give to them" (Deut. xxx. 15-20). And Moses went, and spoke all these words to all Israel, and he said to them: I am this day a hundred and twenty years old. I can no longer go out and come in, especially as the Lord also hath said to me: Thou shalt not pass over this Jordan: and this Josue shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath spoken. And Moses called Josue, and said to him before all Israel (that all the people might know him to be their new leader in the place of Moses, and give obedience unto him): Take courage and be valiant: for thou shalt bring this people into the land which the Lord swore he would give to their fathers, and thou shalt divide it by lot. And the Lord who is your leader, he

Himself will be with thee: He will not leave thee, nor forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (xxxix. 1-3, 7, 8). (b) "Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab upon Mount Nebo (east of the Dead Sea) to the top of Phasga over against Jericho: and the Lord shewed him all the land of Galaad as far as Dan. And all Nephtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasses, and all the land of Juda unto the furthestmost sea. And the south part, and the breadth of the plain of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Segor. And the Lord said to him: This is the land, for which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying: I will give it to thy seed. Thou hast seen it with thy eyes and shalt not pass over to it. And Moses the servant of the Lord died there, in the land of Moab, by the commandment of the Lord: And He buried him in the valley of the land of Moab over against Phogor: and no man hath known of his sepulchre until this present day. God buried him by the ministry of angels, and would have the place of his burial unknown, lest the Israelites, who were so prone to idolatry, might worship him with divine honors. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, neither were his teeth moved (that he was still in his vigor and his strength). And the children of Israel mourned for him in the plains of Moab thirty days: and the days of their mourning in which they mourned for Moses were ended. And Josue the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands upon him. And the children of Israel obeyed him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (xxxiv. 1-10).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Moses' Last Exhortation.* Moses exhorted the people: (a) To a firm faith in the one true God. This was the more necessary, as the Israelites were again to live among idolaters. (b) To an interior and childlike love for God, who had showered His blessings upon them. What is the commandment of the love of God? What does the commandment of the love of God require of us? (c) To make known to their children the goodness of God and teach them His commandments. (d) To keep all of God's commandments, and thereby bring upon themselves God's richest blessings; if they broke the same, God's curse would be upon them. 2. *The Prophecy of the Messias.* Moses prophesied that God would call forth a prophet out of Israel. This prophecy was fulfilled in our Saviour, of whom Moses was a figure. 3. *God's Justice and Faithfulness.* Moses was to die before entering the Promised Land. This was a just punishment for having doubted the mercy of God. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? In the death of Moses God executed His threat. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? 4. *Moses as a Figure of Christ.* When Moses was born, a cruel

king put to death the children of the Hebrews; when our Saviour was born, a cruel king put to death the children of Bethlehem and its environs. Moses escapes the fury of Pharaoh; our Saviour escapes the fury of Herod. Moses is sent to deliver the people from the bondage of Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land; our Saviour is sent by God to deliver the people from the bondage of sin and lead them into heaven. Moses performed great miracles to prove that he was sent by God; Christ performed great miracles to prove that he was the son of God. Moses fed his people with bread that fell from heaven; our Saviour feeds men with the living bread which came down from heaven for their salvation. 5. *The Virtues of Moses.* (a) Moses possessed a great love for his people. For them he left the king's palace in Egypt to encounter the hardships of the Wilderness. He interceded for them with God, even offering himself to God in atonement for their sins. (b) He showed most admirable patience with the people, who even attempted once to stone him. (c) His deep piety was proved in his fasting, prayer and direct intercourse with God. (d) His zeal for the honor of God was proved in all his words and works, especially on his return from Sinai and in his last beautiful exhortations before his death.

E. *Moral Application.*—Think often of the manifold blessings God has bestowed upon you. Show your love and gratitude in acts of thanksgiving, but most particularly by keeping His commandments. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John xiv. 21).

REVIEW OF THE LIFE OF MOSES.

1. Brief description of the journey of the Israelites through the desert. 2. The prophecies of the Messias. 3. Figures of the Messias. 4. What means were employed by the all-wise Providence to preserve the true faith and the memory of the promise of a Redeemer among the people of Israel. -

THE TIME OF JOSUE AND THE JUDGES (ABOUT 1450-1095 B. C.).

XLVIII.—ENTRANCE INTO THE PROMISED LAND.

A. *Preparation.*—After the death of Moses the Israelites passed over the Jordan, conquered the land of Chanaan, and divided it among the twelve tribes.

B. Narration.—(a) Passage through the Jordan. (b) The conquest of Jericho. (c) Conquest of the remaining lands. (d) Division of the same. (e) The death of Josue.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And Josue said to the people: Be ye sanctified: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. So the people went out of their tents to pass over the Jordan: and the priests that carried the ark of the covenant went on before them. And as soon as they came into the Jordan, and their feet were dipped in part of the water (now the Jordan, it being harvest time, had filled the banks of its channel), the waters that came down from above stood in one place, and swelling up like a mountain, were seen afar off from the city that is called Adom, to the place of Sarthau: but those that were beneath ran down into the sea of the wilderness (which now is called the Dead Sea) until they wholly failed. And the people marched over against Jericho (see map): and the priests that carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood girded upon the dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all the people passed over through the channel that was dried up" (Josue iii. 5, 14-17). With firm faith and confidence in God the people entered the passage made through the Jordan. This miracle had been revealed to Josue by God. "And when the priests that carry the ark of the Lord, the God of the whole earth, shall set the soles of their feet in the waters of the Jordan, the waters that are beneath shall run down and go off: and those that come from above, shall stand together upon a heap" (iii. 13). (b) "And the people came up out of the Jordan, the tenth day of the first month, and camped in Galgal, over against the east side of the city of Jericho. Now when all the kings of the Amorrites who dwelt beyond the Jordan westward, and all the kings of Chanaan, who possessed the places near the great sea, had heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the children of Israel, till they passed over, their heart failed them, and there remained no spirit in them, fearing the coming in of the children of Israel. And the children of Israel abode in Galgal, and they kept the phase on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening, in the plains of Jericho: And they ate on the next day unleavened bread of the corn of the land. And manna ceased after they ate of the corn of the land, neither did the children of Israel use that food any more, but they ate of the corn of the present year of the land of Chanaan. (There being now sufficient nourishment the manna was no longer necessary.) Now Jericho was close shut up and fenced, for fear of the children of Israel, and no man durst go out or come in. And Josue rising before day, the priests took the ark of the Lord, and seven of them seven trumpets which are used in the jubilee: and they went before the ark of the Lord walking and sounding the trumpets: and the armed men went before them, and the rest of the common people followed the ark, and they blew the trumpets. And they went around about the city the second day once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days. But the seventh day rising up early they went about the city, as it was ordered seven times. And when in the seventh going about the priests sounded with the trumpets, Josue said to all Israel: Shout: for the Lord hath delivered the city to you: So all the people shouted and the trumpets sounded, when the voice and the sound thundered

in the ears of the multitude, the walls forthwith fell down: and every man went up by the place that was over against him: and they took the city. At that time, Josue made an imprecation, saying: Cursed be the man before the Lord that shall raise up and build the city of Jericho. (Jericho, in the mythical sense, signifies iniquity: the sounding of the trumpets by the priests, the preaching of the word of God, by which the walls of Jericho are thrown down, when sinners are converted; and a dreadful curse will light on them who build them up again.) (c) And Josue arose, and all the army of the fighting men with him, to go up against Hai: and he sent thirty thousand chosen valiant men in the night. So Josue and all Israel seeing that the city was taken, and that the smoke of the city rose up, returned and slew the men of Hai. Therefore Adonisedec king of Jerusalem sent to Oham king of Hebron, and to Pharam king of Jerimoth, and to Japhia king of Lachis, and to Dabir king of Eglon, saying: Come up to me, and bring help, that we may take Gabaon, because it hath gone over to Josue, and to the children of Israel. But the inhabitants of the city of Gabaon which was besieged sent to Josue. And Josue went up from Galgal, and all the army of warriors with him most valiant men. And the Lord said to Josue: Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thy hands: none of them shall be able to stand against thee. Then Josue spoke to the Lord, in the day that he delivered the Amorrite in the sight of the children of Israel, and he said before them: Move not, O sun, toward Gabaon, nor thou O moon, toward the valley of Ajalon. And the sun and the moon stood still, till the people had conquered their enemies. The same day Josue took Maceda, and destroyed it, with the edge of the sword. And he passed from Maceda with all Israel to Lebna, and fought against it; from Lebna he passed unto Lachis, with all Israel. And the Lord delivered Lachis into the hands of Israel. And he passed from Lachis to Eglon, and took it the same day. He went up also with all Israel from Eglon to Hebron, and fought against it: took it, and destroyed it. Returning from thence to Dabir, he took it and destroyed it. So Josue took all the country of the hills and of the south, and the land of Gosen, and the plains and the west country, and the mountain of Israel and the plains thereof. And part of the mountain that goeth up to Leir as far as Baalgad, by the plain of Libanus under Mount Hermon: all their kings he took and smote and slew" (iv. 19: v.; viii. 3, 21; x. 3, 39; xi. 16, 17).

(d) Josue was old, and far advanced in years (he was then about one hundred and one years old), and the Lord said to him: Thou art grown old, and advanced in age, and there is a very large country left, which is not yet divided by lot: (not yet possessed by the children of Israel) And now divide the land in possession to the nine tribes, and to the half tribe of Manasses, with whom Ruben and Gad have possessed the land (that is with the other half of that same tribe) which Moses the servant of the Lord delivered to them beyond the river Jordan on the east side: But to the tribe of Levi he gave no possession: but the sacrifices and victims of the Lord God of Israel, are his inheritance, as he spoke to him. (This tribe was to possess no land that they might be unhindered and give themselves up entirely to the service of God. They were to live by the gifts of the others, receive tithes, one-tenth of all that was raised, and also by the sacrifices and victims.) This is what

the children of Israel possessed in the land of Chanaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Josue the son of Nun, and the princes of the families by the tribes of Israel gave to them: Dividing all by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, to the nine tribes and the half tribe. For to two tribes and a half Moses had given possession beyond the Jordan: besides the Levites, who received no land among their brethren" (xiii. 1, 7, 8, 14; xiv. 1-3). (e) "And when a long time was passed, since the Lord had given peace to Israel, all the nations round about being subdued, and Josue being now old and far advanced in years. Josue called for all Israel and for the elders, and for the princes, and for the judges, and for the masters, and said to them: I am old and far advanced in years: And you see all that the Lord your God hath done to all the nations round about, how he himself hath fought for you: Take courage and be careful to observe all things that are written in the book of the law of Moses: and turn not aside from them neither to the right hand nor to the left. Lest that after you are come in among the Gentiles, who will remain among you, you should swear by the name of their gods, and serve them, and adore them: But cleave ye unto the Lord your God: as you have done until this day. This only take care of with all diligence, that you love the Lord your God. And he sent the people away every one to his own possession. And after these things Josue the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died being a hundred and ten years old" (xxiii. 1, 9).

D. Commentary.—1. *God's Power and Faithfulness.* God worked many miracles in favor of the Israelites upon their entrance into the Promised Land. Name them. (1. The separation of the waters of the Jordan and standing still of the same, that a dry passage be made for the Israelites. 2. The falling of the walls of Jericho. 3. The standing still of the sun.) Who alone can work miracles? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? On the boundaries of Chanaan Jacob offered sacrifice to God, who promised that He would lead Jacob's descendants back into the land of Chanaan. We see how the promise of God was fulfilled. What is that attribute of God by which He will surely keep His promises and carry out His threats? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? 2. *The Miracles and their Object.* Consider the first miracle! The waters of the Jordan stood still, dividing themselves and rising like a mountain on either side of a dry passage. This is impossible to any natural power. Who, then, wrought this wonderful work? Consider the falling of the walls of Jericho, not by means of human strength, but at the sound of the trumpets and the shouting of the Israelites, this being the will of God. Again Josue, fearing that the day would close before the entire defeat of his enemies, after addressing the Most High,

turned toward the sun and said: "Stand thou still!" and the sun stood still, because nothing is difficult for God; it costs Him no more to stay the sun than it does to put it in motion. Such works, because they are beyond the natural power of man and can be ascribed only to the omnipotence of God, we call miracles. Why do we call such works miracles? These wonderful works of God in favor of the Israelites, and seen by them, certainly should have strengthened their faith and hope in and love for God. 3. *Josue a Figure of Christ.* Josue signifies Saviour; Jesus signifies Saviour. Josue succeeded Moses, who was not permitted to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land; Our Saviour succeeded Moses, whose law was not sufficient to bring men to heaven. Josue introduced the children of Israel into the Holy Land; Christ introduces the children of God into heaven. Josue after many combats with the pagan Chanaanites finally possessed all the land for the Israelites; Christ obtained for us the possession of heaven by His bitter passion, death and resurrection, through which He conquered Satan. As long as the Israelites were faithful to the advice of Josue, they were happy; as long as Christians are faithful to the counsels of Our Lord, they are happy.

E. *Moral Application.*—The Israelites fought hard and valiantly before they conquered their enemies and obtained the Promised Land. So must you fight hard and valiantly, that you may conquer yourselves and obtain heaven. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (Matt. xi. 12). Strive earnestly to overcome your evil inclinations and especially the fault you most frequently commit. Make the firm resolution to conquer that sin especially into which you most frequently fall. Seek to become more and more virtuous. Virtue is far more precious than wealth, beauty or talents.

XLIX.—THE JUDGES.

A. *Preparation.*—After the death of Josue the Hebrews no longer had a leader but were governed by judges. Whenever the people were attacked God chose certain pious men, called judges, to free them from the power of their enemies.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Ingratitude of the Israelites. (b) Their punishment. (c) The judges. (d) God's mercy.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they served Baalim. And they left the Lord the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt: and they followed strange gods, and the gods of the people that dwelt round about them, and they adored them: and they provoked the Lord to anger, forsaking him and serving Baal and Astaroth. (What is here said of the children of Israel, as to their falling so often into idolatry, is to be understood of a great part of them: but not so universally, as if the true worship of God was ever quite abolished among them: for the succession of the true church and religion was kept up all this time by the priests and Levites, at least in the house of God in Silo.) (b) "And the Lord being angry against the Israelites, delivered them into the hands of plunderers: who took them and sold them to their enemies, that dwelt round about: neither could they stand against their enemies" (Judges ii. 11-14). (c) "And the Lord raised up judges, to deliver them from the hands of those that oppressed them: (d) And when the Lord raised them up judges, in their days He was moved to mercy, and heard the groanings of the afflicted, and delivered them from the slaughter of the oppressors" (ii. 16, 18).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Bad Company.* The pagan Chanaanites in a short time led the Israelites into idolatry. What leads us to fall away from the faith? 2. *God's Justice and Mercy.* As often as the Israelites disobeyed God, He punished them by giving them into the hands of their enemies, by whom they were severely oppressed. What is that attribute of God by which He punishes the wicked according to their desert? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? When the Israelites acknowledged their sin and, showing their contrition, begged of God for mercy and help, He freely forgave them and assisted them to conquer their oppressors. What is that attribute of God by which He graciously pardons every one that is sincerely penitent? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? 3. *Object of Earthly Sufferings.* See chapter XLV.

E. *Moral Application.*—Avoid all evil companions and occasions of sin. Love and frequent the society of those friends who are virtuous and who would aid you to strive after that which is good.

L.—GIDEON.

A. *Preparation.*—The Hebrews soon forgot the promises they had made. They even forgot God Himself, and went so far as to give themselves up to idolatry. God punished this crime, and all that followed from it by allowing the infidel nations, among others the Madianites, who lived southeast of the land of Chanaan (see map), to lay waste their country. In their necessity

the Israelites called upon God, repented of their sin and begged for mercy. God sent the judge Gedeon to deliver them.

B. Narration.—(a) Ingratitude and punishment of the Israelites. (b) Gedeon and the angels. (c) The two miracles. (d) Gedeon's setting out for battle. (e) Conquest of the Madianites.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord: (In that they worshipped the god Baal.) And he delivered them into the hand of Madian seven years: And Israel was humbled exceedingly in the sight of Madian. And he cried to the Lord desiring help against the Madianites. (b) And an angel of the Lord came, and sat under an oak, that was in Ephra, and belonged to Joas the father of the family of Ezri. And when Gedeon his son was threshing and cleansing wheat by the wine press, to flee from Madian (had it been done in the open fields it would have fallen into the hands of the Madianites), the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: The Lord is with thee, O most valiant of men. And the Lord looked upon him and said: Go in this thy strength, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the hand of Madian: Know that I have sent thee. He answered and said: I beseech thee, my Lord, wherewith shall I deliver Israel? Behold my family is the meanest in Manasses, and I am the least in my father's house. (Mark how the Lord chooseth the humble, who are mean and little in their own eyes, for the greatest enterprises.) And the Lord said to him I will be with thee and thou shalt cut off Madian as one man. (c) Now all Madian, and Amalec, and the Eastern people were gathered together, and passing over the Jordan, camped in the valley of Israel. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gedeon (strengthening him for the combat) and he sounded the trumpet and called together the house of Abiezer, to follow him. And he sent messengers into all Manasses, and they also followed him: and other messengers into Aser and Zabulon and Nephtali, and they came to meet him. And Gedeon said to God: If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, I will put this fleece of wool on the floor: if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry on all the ground beside, I shall know that by my hand, as thou hast said, thou wilt deliver Israel. And it was so. And rising before day wringing the fleece, he filled a vessel with the dew. And he said again to God: Let not thy wrath be kindled against me if I try once more seeking a sign in the fleece. I pray thee that the fleece only may be dry, and all the ground wet with dew. And God did that night as he had requested: and it was dry on the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground. (These miracles took place before the army of 32,000 men who were to take part in the conflict and had been requested by Gedeon to give them confidence and courage.) (d) And the Lord said to Gedeon: The people that are with thee are many, and Madian shall not be delivered into their hands: Lest Israel should glory against me and say: I was delivered by my own strength. (By this we see that God will not choose for His instruments in great achievements, which depend purely on His grace such as, through pride and self-conceit, will take the glory to themselves.) Speak to the people and proclaim in the hearing of all, whosoever is fearful

from Mount Galaad and returned home and only ten thousand remained. And the Lord said to Gedeon: The people are still too many, bring them to the waters and there I will try them: and of whom I shall say to thee, this shall go with thee let him go: whom I shall forbid to go let him return. And the Lord said to Gedeon: By the three hundred men, that lapped water, I will save you, and deliver Madian into thy hand: but let all the rest of the people return to their place. (These were preferred that took the water up in their hands, and so lapped it, before them who laid themselves quite down to the waters to drink: which argued a more eager and sensual disposition.) So taking victuals and trumpets according to their number, he ordered all the rest of the multitude to depart to their tents: and he with three hundred gave himself to the battle. (e) The same night the Lord said to him: Arise, and go down into the camp: because I have delivered them into thy hand. But Madian and Amalec, and all the Eastern people lay scattered in the valley as a multitude of locusts: their camels also were innumerable as the sand that lieth on the sea shore. And when Gedeon was come, one told his neighbor a dream. He to whom he spoke answered: This is nothing else but the sword of Gedeon the son of Joas, a man of Israel. For the Lord hath delivered Madian and all their camp into his hand. And when Gedeon had heard the dream, and the interpretation thereof, he adored: and returned to the camp of Israel and said: Arise, for the Lord hath delivered the camp of Madian into our hands" (Judges vi. 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14-16, 33-40; vii. 2-4, 7-9, 12-15).

D. Commentary.—1. *God's Wise Precaution for the Preservation of the True Faith.* Idolatry, to which the Israelites had again given themselves, was a great danger to the true faith. Little by little all of the people would have been drawn to the worship of idols and faith in the one true God, and hope for the coming of the Messias would have been destroyed. Therefore God gave His unfaithful people into the hands of the enemy and allowed it to be sorely pressed. In its great need Israel recognized its crime and returned penitent to God. 2. *God's Justice, Mercy and Goodness.* God's justice may be seen in the punishment of the Israelites for their unfaithfulness to God. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? His mercy and goodness showed themselves (a) in the pardoning of the sins of the people when they returned penitent to Him, and (b) in delivering the people from the hands of their enemy. What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? "God is good"? 3. *Gedeon a Figure of Christ.* Gedeon was the saviour of his people; Christ the Saviour of all mankind. Gedeon was the last among his brothers; our Saviour deigned to appear as the last among men. Two great miracles prove that Gedeon is chosen; the greatest miracles prove that our Saviour is chosen the Liberator of mankind. Gedeon with only three hundred men marched against

a whole host of enemies; our Saviour marches to conquer the universe with twelve humble fishermen.

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn from Gedeon, who said of himself: "I am the least in my father's house," the beautiful lesson of humility, the virtue of so many saints who are now glorified and happy with God for eternity. Meditate upon the humility of our Blessed Mother: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done unto me according to Thy word." Beg of Jesus this great virtue, "Jesus meek and humble of heart make my heart like unto thine." Remember the words of the Scriptures: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. xxiii. 12).

LI.—SAMSON.

A. *Preparation*.—After the death of Gedeon the Israelites again fell into idolatry, and in punishment God allowed them to be severely oppressed by the Philistines for forty years, after which He delivered them through Samson of whom we shall now speak.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The foretelling of the birth of Samson. (b) Samson's strength and delivery. (c) Samson in Gaza. (d) Samson and Dalila. (e) Samson's death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Now there was a certain man of Saraa, and of the race of Dan, whose name was Manue, and his wife was barren. And an angel of the Lord appeared to her, and said: Thou art barren and without children: but thou shalt conceive and bear a son. Because thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and no razor shall touch his head: for he shall be a Nazarite of God, from his infancy, and from his mother's womb, and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines. (Nazarite of God, that is, one set aside, in a particular manner, and consecrated to God.) (b) And she bore a son, and called his name Samson. And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord began to be with him in the camp of Dan, between Saraa and Esthaol. Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Thamnath. And when they were come to the vineyards of the town, behold a young lion met him raging and roaring. And the spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he tore the lion as he would have torn a kid in pieces, having nothing at all in his hand. Then the Philistines going up into the land of Juda, camped in the place which afterwards was called Lechi, that is, the Jawbone, where their army was spread. And the men of the tribe of Juda said to them: Why are you come up against us? They answered: We are come to bind Samson and to pay him for what he hath done against us. And they bound him with two new cords, and and timorous, let him return. So two and twenty thousand men went away

brought him from the rock Etam. Now when he was come to the place of the jawbone, and the Philistines shouting went to meet him, the spirit of the Lord came strongly upon him: and as the flax is wont to be consumed at the approach of fire, so the bands with which he was bound were broken and loosed. And finding a jawbone, even the jawbone of an ass, which lay there, catching it up he slew therewith a thousand men. (c) He went also into Gaza the capital of the Philistines (see map). And when the Philistines had heard this, and it was noised about among them that Samson was come into the city, they surrounded him, setting guards at the gate of the city, and watching there all the night in silence, that in the morning they might kill him as he went out. But Samson slept till midnight, and then rising he took both the doors of the gate, with the posts thereof and the bolt, and laying them on his shoulders, carried them up on the top of the hill, which looketh toward Hebron. (d) After this he loved a woman who dwelt in the valley of Sorec, and she was called Dalila. And the princes of the Philistines came to her, and said: Deceive him, and learn of him wherein his great strength lieth, and how we may be able to overcome him, to bind and afflict him: which if thou shalt do, we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver." "And when she pressed him much and continually hung upon him for many days, giving him no time to rest, his soul fainted away, and was wearied even until death. Then opening the truth of the thing, he said to her: The razor hath never come upon my head, for I am a Nazarite, that is to say, consecrated to God from my mother's womb: if my head be shaven, my strength shall depart from me, and I shall become weak, and shall be like other men." But she made him sleep upon her knees, and she called a barber, and shaved his seven locks, and began to drive him away, and thrust him from her; for immediately his strength departed from him. Then the Philistines seized upon him, and forthwith pulled out his eyes, and led him bound in chains to Gaza, and shutting him up in prison made him grind. (e) And now his hair began to grow again. And the princes of the Philistines assembled together, to offer great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to make merry, saying: Our god hath delivered our enemy Samson into our hands. And the people also seeing this, praised their god, they commanded that Samson should be called, and should play before them. And being brought out of prison he played before them. And he said to the lad that guided his steps: Suffer me to touch the pillars which support the whole house, and let me lean upon them and rest a little. Now the house was full of men and women, and all the princes of the Philistines were there. Moreover about three thousand persons of both sexes from the roof and the higher part of the house were beholding Samson's play. But he called upon the Lord, saying: O Lord God, remember me, and restore to me now my former strength, O my God, that I may revenge myself on my enemies, and for the loss of my two eyes I may take one revenge. (This desire of revenge was out of zeal for justice against the enemies of God and his people; and not out of private rancor and malice of heart.) He said: Let me die with the Philistines. And when he had strongly shook the pillars, the house fell upon all the princes, and the rest of the multitude that was there: and he killed many more at his death, than he had killed before in his life. And his breth-

ren and all his kindred, going down took his body, and buried it between Saraa and Esthaol in the burying place of his father, Manue" (Judges xiii. 2, 3, 5, 24, 25; xiv. 5, 6; xv. 9, 10, 13-15; xvi. 1-5, 16, 17, 19, 21-28, 30).

D. *Commentary*.—1. *God's Justice and Goodness*. The Israelites had again done evil in the sight of the Lord; therefore He gave them up to be oppressed by the Philistines for a period of forty years. This was a well-merited punishment. What is this attribute of God by which He punishes the wicked according to their desserts? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? In order to deliver the people from the hands of their oppressors, God raised up for them a saviour in the person of Samson. This was a great blessing for the Israelites. What is that attribute of God by which He bestows numberless blessings? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 2. *Samson a Figure of Christ*. The birth of each was announced by an angel. Samson killed a lion, which came to devour him; Our Saviour overpowered Satan, who, like a lion, endeavors to devour His Church. Samson was betrayed and delivered up for a price by Dalila. Our Saviour was betrayed and delivered up for a price by Judas. Samson sacrificed his life for his people. Christ sacrificed His life on the cross for all mankind.

E. *Moral Application*.—Four or five times Samson freed himself from the enemies who had overpowered him; but when again bound he no longer had the power to free himself, and he met with death. Beware of relapsing into sin. Four times, five times, twenty times you may fall, and, rising again, return to God, but the time might come when falling into mortal sin you might die in that state and be forever lost.

LII.—RUTH.

A. *Preparation*.—In the time of the judges there lived a pious woman, named Ruth; whom, owing to her virtues, God chose to be one of those from whom Christ sprung according to the flesh.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Elimelech and Noemi in the land of Moab. (b) Noemi's return to Bethlehem. (c) Ruth gleaneth in the field of Booz. (d) Ruth's care for Noemi. (e) Booz marrieth Ruth.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "In the days of one of the judges, when the judges ruled, there came a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem,

Juda, went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. (Bethlehem, southwest of Jerusalem, Moab, east of the Dead Sea, see map.) He was named Elimelech, and his wife Noemi: and his two sons, the one Mahalon, and the other Chelion. And Elimelech the husband of Noemi died: and she remained with her two sons. And they took wives of the women of Moab, of which one was called Orpha, and the other Ruth. And they dwelt there ten years. And they both died, to wit, Mahalon and Chelion: and the woman was left alone, having lost both her sons and her husband. (b) Wherefore she went forth out of her place of sojournment, with both her daughters-in-law: and being now in the way to return to the land of Juda, she said to them: Go ye home to your mothers: the Lord deal mercifully with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. And they lifted up their voice and began to weep again: Orpha kissed her mother-in-law and returned: Ruth stuck close to her mother-in-law. And Noemi said to her: Behold thy kinswoman is returned to her people, and to her gods, go thou with her. (Noemi did not mean to persuade Ruth to return to the false gods she had formerly worshipped: but by this manner of speech, insinuated to her, that if she would go with her she must renounce her false gods and return to the Lord the God of Israel.) She answered: Be not against me, to desire that I should leave thee and depart: for whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go: and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. (Thus Ruth embraced the true faith.) The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die: and there will I be buried. The Lord do so and so to me, and add more also, if aught but death part me and thee. So they went together and came to Bethlehem. (c) Now her husband Elimelech had a kinsman, a powerful man, and very rich, whose name was Booz. And Ruth the Moabitess said to her mother-in-law: If thou wilt, I will go into the field, and glean the ears of corn that escape the hands of the reapers, wheresoever I shall find grace with a householder that will be favorable to me. And she answered her: go my daughter. She went therefore and gleaned the ears of corn after the reapers. And it happened that the owner of that field was Booz, who was the kindred of Elimelech. And Booz said to the young man that was set over the reapers whose maid is this? And he answered him: This is the Moabitess who came with Noemi, from the land of Moab, and she desired leave to glean the ears of corn that remain, following the steps of the reapers: and she hath been in the field from morning till now, and hath not gone home for one moment. (She was therefore untiringly diligent in order to obtain the necessary nourishment for herself and Noemi. Therefore Booz was much pleased.) And Booz said to Ruth: Hear me, daughter, do not go to glean in any other field, and do not depart from this place: but keep with my maids, and follow where they reap. For I have charged my young men not to molest thee. (d) All hath been told me, that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law after the death of thy husband: and how thou hast left thy parents, and the land wherein thou wast born, and art come to a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord render unto thee for thy work, and mayest thou receive a full reward of the Lord the God of Israel, to whom thou art come, and under whose wings thou art fled. And Booz commanded his servants,

saying: If she would even reap with you hinder her not: And let fall some of your handfuls of purpose and leave them, that she may gather them without shame, and let no man rebuke her when she gathereth them: She gleaned therefore in the field till evening: and beating out with a rod and threshing what she had gleaned, she found about the measure of an ephi of barley, that is, three bushels: which she took up and returned into the city, and shewed it to her mother-in-law; moreover she brought out and gave her of the remains of her meat, wherewith she had been filled. (e) Booz therefore took Ruth, and married her: and went in unto her, and the Lord gave her to conceive and to bear a son. And the woman said to Noemi: Blessed be the Lord, who hath not suffered thy family to want a successor, that his name should be preserved in Israel. And thou shouldst have one to comfort thy soul, and cherish thy old age. For he is born of thy daughter-in-law: who loveth thee: and is much better to thee, than if thou hadst seven sons. And Noemi taking the child laid it in her bosom, and she carried it and was a nurse unto it. And the women, her neighbors, congratulating with her and saying: There is a son born to Noemi: Called his name Obed: he is the father of Isai, the father of David." (From whom was descended the Saviour.) (Ruth i. 1-5, 7, 8, 14-17, 19; ii. 1-3, 5-9, 11, 12, 15-18; iv. 13-17).

D. Commentary.—1. *The Ruling of Divine Providence.* God decreed that Ruth should glean in the field of the rich man Booz, because He wished to reward her for her many virtues. Booz being pleased with the virtuous maiden, took her as his wife, which put an end to her poverty. Thus God ordains and arranges everything in this world according to His wisdom, goodness and justice. What do we call God's supreme care in preserving and governing the world? 2. *Noemi's Virtues.* Although dwelling long in a pagan land, Noemi remained true to her faith, and by the beautiful example of her life won her daughter-in-law Ruth over to the one true faith. 3. *Ruth's Virtues.* Ruth's love for and devotion to Noemi was so great that she left her country and her people to remain by her side. She was obedient, diligent, modest and pure in heart.

Moral Application.—Beg of the Blessed Mother that you may imitate her purity and love it as Ruth did. Remember that through this virtue you are like unto the angels. "Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation! for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and with men" (Wisd. iv. 1).

LIII.—SAMUEL.

A. *Preparation*.—After Samson, the high priest Heli was judge in Israel. While he was judge Samuel was born.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Anna's prayer and its fulfillment. Samuel in Silo. (b) The wickedness of the sons of Heli. (c) The declaration of the punishment against the house of Heli. (d) The fulfillment of the punishment. (e) The ark of God in the land of the Philistines. (f) The repentance and victory of the Israelites.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "There was a man of Ramathaim-sophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elcana. And he had two wives, the name of one was Anna, and the name of the other Phenenna. Phenenna had children: but Anna had no children. And this man went up out of the city upon the appointed day, to adore and to offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Silo. So Anna arose after she had eaten and drunk in Silo: And Heli the priest sitting upon a stool before the door of the temple of the Lord. (Heli therefore was the spiritual as well as the temporal head, being both high priest and judge.) As Anna had her heart full of grief she prayed to the Lord, shedding many tears. And she made a vow, saying: O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt look down on the affliction of thy servant, and wilt be mindful of me, and not forget thy handmaid, and will give to thy servant a man child: I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head. Then Heli said to her: Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition, which thou hast asked of him. And it came to pass when the time was come about, Anna conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel: because she had asked him of the Lord. (This name imports "Asked of God.") And after she had weaned him she carried him with her, and she brought him to the house of the Lord in Silo. And they immolated a calf, and offered the child to Heli. And Anna said: I beseech thee my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord: I am that woman who stood before thee here praying to the Lord. For this child did I pray, and the Lord hath granted me my petition, which I asked of him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord all the days of his life, he shall be lent to the Lord. And they adored the Lord there. (b) Now the sons of Heli were children of Belial (children of the devil because they served him), not knowing the Lord. Nor the office of the priests to the people: but whosoever had offered a sacrifice, the servant of the priest came, while the flesh was in boiling, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand, and thrust it into the kettle or into the caldron or into the pot, or into the pan: and all that the fleshhook brought up, the priest took to himself. Thus did they to all Israel that came to Silo. Wherefore the sin of the young men was exceeding great before the Lord: because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord. But Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord: being a child girded with a linen ephod.

And his mother made him a little coat which she brought to him on the appointed days when she went up with her husband, to offer the solemn sacrifice. And the child Samuel became great before the Lord. (c) And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold I do a thing in Israel: and whosoever shall hear it both his ears shall tingle. In that day I shall raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house: I will begin and I will make an end. For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house forever, for iniquity, because he knew that his sons did wickedly and did not chastise them. Therefore have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings for ever. Then Heli called Samuel, and he asked him: What is the word that the Lord hath spoken to thee? I beseech thee hide it not from me. So Samuel told him all the words and did not hide them from him, and he answered: It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his sight. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and not one of his words fell to the ground. (d) And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight: And Israel went out to war against the Philistines, and camped by the stone of help. (In Hebrew Ebenezer; so called from the help which the Lord was pleased afterwards to give to His people Israel in that place, by the prayers of Samuel.) And the Philistines came to Aphec, and put their army in array against Israel. And when they had joined battle, Israel turned their backs to the Philistines, and there was slain in that fight here and there in the fields about four thousand men. And the ancients of Israel said: Let us fetch unto us the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Silo, and let it come into the midst of us, that it may save us from the hand of our enemies. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord was come into the camp all Israel shouted with a great shout. So the Philistines fought, and Israel was overthrown. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army and came to Silo the same day, with his clothes rent, and his head strewn with dust. And when he was come, Heli sat upon the stool over against the way watching. For his heart was fearful for the ark of God. Now Heli was ninety and eight years old and his eyes were dim, and he could not see. And he said to Heli: I am he that came from the battle, and have fled out of the field this day. And he said to him: What is there done my son? And he that brought the news answered and said: Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter of the people: moreover thy two sons, Ophni and Phinnes, are dead: and the ark of God is taken. And when he had named the ark of God, he fell from his stool backwards by the door and broke his neck and died. For he was an old man, and far advanced in years: And he judged Israel forty years. (e) And the Philistines took the ark of God, and carried it from the stone of help into Azotus. And the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon. (They attributed their victory to their god Dagon and gave him the ark as a present.) And when the Azotians arose early the next day, behold Dagon lay upon his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord: And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians, and He destroyed them, and afflicted Azotus and the coasts thereof with emerods. And in the villages and fields in the midst of the country, there came forth a multitude of mice,

and there was the confusion of a great mortality in the city. And the men of Azotus seeing this kind of plague, said: The ark of the God of Israel shall not stay with us: for his hand is heavy upon us, and upon Dagon our god. (The ark was sent back to Bethsames, where many were slain for looking through curiosity into it.) (f) And the men of Cariathiarim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord and carried it to the house of Abinadab in Gabaa: and they sanctified Eleazar his son, to keep the ark of the Lord. And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying: If you turn to the Lord with all your heart, put away the strange gods from among you, Baalim and Astaroth: and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel put away Baalim and Astaroth, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said: Gather all Israel to Masphath, that I may pray to the Lord for you. And they fasted on that day, and they said there we have sinned against the Lord. And it came to pass when Samuel was offering the holocaust, the Philistines began the battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and terrified them, and they were overthrown before the face of Israel. And the men of Israel going out of Masphath pursued after the Philistines, and made slaughter of them till they came under Bethchar. And Samuel took a stone, and laid it between Masphath and Sen: and he called the place the stone of help. And the cities, which the Philistines had taken from Israel, were restored to Israel. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorrites. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life" (I. Kings i. 1-3, 9-11, 17, 20, 24-28; ii. 12-14, 17-19, 21; iii. 11-14, 16-19; iv. 1-3, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15-18; v. 1-3, 6-7; vii. 1, 3-6, 10-12, 15).

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Vow of the Pious Woman Anna* (refer to chapter XVIII.). 2. *Sacrilege*. The sons of Heli took what according to the law of the sacrifice belonged to God only. They dishonored the holy place, the place of offering consecrated to God by the holy tabernacle, and threatened those who came to make offerings, when they opposed their wicked actions. What do you call the profaning of holy things, persons or places consecrated to God? What is sacrilege? 3. *Heli's Sins*. Heli did not punish his sons for their wrongdoing and they became more and more wicked. Therefore he was to blame for their godlessness. He violated the fourth commandment. What is the duty of parents toward their children? By this sin of omission Heli shared in the sins of his sons. Do those parents sin who neglect their duties toward their children? How many ways are there of being accessory to another's sin? In which way was Heli accessory? (The seventh.) 4. *God's Justice, Goodness and Mercy*. God rewarded Samuel for his virtues by making him judge over Israel, and through his intercession freeing the Israelites from the

hands of the Philistines. He punished Heli for his neglect of his duty towards his sons, the sons of Heli he punished for their ungodliness, the Israelites for their faithlessness towards Himself, and the Philistines for their crime in making a gift of the ark of the Lord to their gods. What is that attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked according to each one's deserts? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? God heard the prayers of Anna and gave her a son. He forgave the sins of His people when they penitently returned to Him, and let them triumph over their enemies. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? "God is merciful"?

E. Moral Application.—Beware, lest by disobeying your parents you become like the sons of Heli. God severely punishes those children who break the fourth commandment. Honor and love your parents, pastors, teachers and all your superiors and show them gratitude. Take the child Jesus as your model. Though the Son of God, He was subject to Mary and Joseph.

REVIEW OF THE TIME OF JOSUE AND OF THE JUDGES.

Recapitulation of chief events. Messianic Prophecies. Messianic types. How was the true faith in Israel preserved by divine Providence?

THE TIME OF THE KINGS (1095-588 B. C.).

LIV.—SAUL, THE FIRST KING.

A. Preparation.—The Israelites now wished to be governed by kings, instead of the judges, who were only called forth by God in times of danger. According to God's command, therefore, Samuel anointed Saul and he was made the first king of the Israelites.

B. Narration.—(a) Israel's desire for a king. (b) The anointing of Saul. (c) Saul's disobedience and downfall.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And it came to pass when Samuel was old, that he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. And his sons walked not in his ways: but they turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment. Then all the ancients of Israel being assembled, came to Samuel to Ramatha. And they said to him: Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk

not in thy ways: make us a king to judge us as all nations have. And the Lord said to Samuel: Now therefore hearken to their voice: but yet testify to them and foretell them the right of the king, that shall reign over them. Then Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who had desired a king of him. (The rights of the king over the people were to be made known to them beforehand that they might not later complain of their own choice.) But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, and they said: nay: but there shall be a king over us" (I. Kings viii. 1, 3-5, 7, 9, 10, 19). (b) "And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him: Behold the man, of whom I spoke to thee, this man shall reign over my people. And Samuel took a little vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said: Behold, the Lord hath anointed thee to be prince over His inheritance, and thou shalt deliver His people out of the hands of their enemies, that are around about them. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that God hath anointed thee to be prince. (By anointing Saul with oil Samuel made known to him he had been chosen by God to be king over His people, the oil signified that he had received the necessary strength and wisdom; oil signifies light in that it nourishes the light and strength as it refreshes and strengthens the members of the body. Samuel "kissed him" as a sign of his allegiance.) And Samuel said to all the people: Surely you see him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people: And all the people cried and said: God save the king. (c) And Samuel said to Saul: The Lord sent me to anoint thee king over His people Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I have reckoned up all that Amalec hath done to Israel: how he opposed them in the way when they came up out of Egypt. Now therefore go, and smite Amalec, and utterly destroy all that he hath: spare him not, nor covet anything that is his: but slay both man and woman, child and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. (The great Master of life and death [who cuts off one-half of all mankind whilst they are children] has been pleased sometimes to ordain that children should be put to the sword, in detestation of the crimes of their parents, and that they might not live to follow the same wicked ways. But without such ordinance of God, it is not allowable in any wars, however just, to kill children. And Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the flocks of sheep and of the herds, and the garments and the rams and all that was beautiful, and would not destroy them. And Samuel came to Saul. And Samuel said: What meaneth then this bleating of the flocks, which soundeth in my ears, and the lowing of the herds which I hear? And Samuel said: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed thee to be king over Israel. And the Lord sent thee on thy way, and said: Go, and kill the sinners of Amalec, and thou shalt fight against them until thou hast utterly destroyed them. Why then didst thou not hearken to the voice of the Lord? but hast turned to the prey, and hast done evil in the eyes of the Lord. And Saul said to Samuel: Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and have walked in the way by which the Lord sent me and have brought Agag the king of Amalec, and Amalec I have slain. But the people took of the spoils sheep and oxen, as the firstfruits of those

things that were slain, to offer sacrifice to the Lord their God in Galgal. (Saul put the blame upon the people, trying to make himself appear free from guilt—this was a lie in the sight of God and added to his guilt.) And Samuel said: Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams. (What a beautiful lesson of obedience is herein taught to us.) Forasmuch therefore as thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king." (Thus Saul was cast off by the Lord and the kingship taken from him and from his family.) (ix. 17; x. 1, 24; xv. 1-3, 9-12, 14, 17-23).

D. Commentary.—1. *God's Goodness and Justice.* God listened to the desire of Israel for a king and caused Saul to be anointed, furnished him with the necessary wisdom and strength and allowed him to vanquish his enemies. Thus God out of the abundance of His love bestowed numberless benefits upon Saul and upon His people Israel. What do we call this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? Saul had received many graces and benefits from God, but nevertheless he proved himself ungrateful through his pride and disobedience. Therefore he was cast off by God, which was a well-merited punishment. What do you call that attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *Pride.* Saul's success in battle against his enemies caused him to fall into the sin of pride. He took unto himself all the glory of the conquest and had built for himself a triumphal arch. In his pride he did not carry out God's commands and took to himself the honor and glory due to God. When do we sin by pride? To which class of sins does pride belong? Which are the seven capital or deadly sins? 3. *Obedience to God.* Samuel said to Saul: "Obedience is better than sacrifices." Saint Gregory the Great, in referring to this, said: "Through the sacrifice on the altar one offered to God the flesh of the animals; through obedience one offers to God one's own free will." As free will is the highest and most-prized possession of man, it stands to reason that obedience is better than sacrifice. He who obeys God keeps His commandments, and only he who loves God keeps His commandments. How do we show that we love God?

E. Moral Application.—Saul was cast off by God because he was disobedient. Every time we deviate from the commandments of God or of the Church we disobey God. How can one truly love God and yet deliberately disobey Him? What a beautiful thing

is true friendship, the love that one man has for another, by which each strives without any thought of self only for the good and happiness of the other. Think of the infinite love God has for each one of you. He wishes to be your friend—think of it, God your friend! Give him then your hearts and your wills; prove to Him your love by keeping His commandments. “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. xix. 17). “Let us love God because God first hath loved us” (I. John iv. 19). “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John xiv. 21).

LV.—DAVID ANOINTED AS KING.

A. *Preparation*.—After the rejection of Saul as king of Israel, God made known to Samuel that David was to be anointed and was to reign over Israel.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Samuel's grief. (b) The sons of Isai. (c) The anointing of David. (d) David at the court of Saul.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) “And the Lord said to Samuel: How long wilt thou mourn for Saul whom I have rejected from reigning over Israel? Fill thy horn with oil, and come, that I may send thee to Isai the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. Then Samuel did as the Lord had said to him. And he came to Bethlehem (see map). And he sanctified Isai and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And when they were come in, he saw Eliab and said: Is the Lord's anointed before him? And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature: because I have rejected him, nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart. (The virtues of the heart—humility, piety and fear of the Lord.) Isai therefore brought his seven sons before Samuel: and Samuel said to Isai: The Lord hath not chosen any one of these. And Samuel said to Isai: Are here all thy sons? He answered: There remaineth yet a young one, who keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said to Isai: Send, and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither. He sent therefore and brought him. Now he was ruddy and beautiful to behold, and of a comely face. And the Lord said arise and anoint him, for this is he. (c) Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward: and Samuel rose up, and went to Ramatha. (d) But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. (An evil spirit by divine permission, and for his punishment. Saul was greatly depressed at being cast off by God and the evil spirit found herein an opportunity to embitter him more and more and draw him farther from God and

at last in despair he took his own life.) And the servants of Saul said to him: Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our Lord give orders, and thy servants who are before thee will seek out a man skilful in playing on the harp, and when the evil spirit from the Lord is upon thee, he may play with his hand, and thou mayest bear it more easily. And Saul said to his servants provide me then some man that can play well, and bring him to me. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him exceedingly, and made him his armourbearer. So whenever the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed, and was better, for the evil spirit departed from him." (Chased away by David's devotion. He played on the harp and sang hymns and Saul's heart became lighter.) (I. Kings xvi. 1, 4-7, 10-17, 21, 23).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *God Sees the Heart.* David was small and not of comely build, but owing to his virtues: piety, humility, purity and fear of the Lord, he was beautiful in the sight of God. Beauty of stature counts for nothing in the sight of God. He looks upon the heart, the virtues it contains. In what does Christian virtue consist? 2. *God's Omniscience, Wisdom and Faithfulness.* God looks upon the heart and sees its every attribute—invisible to the eyes of man. Man's most secret thought is known to God. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? Our Lord had David anointed king and wished, in contrast to Saul, to make of him a good and virtuous ruler. In order that he might be well versed in his duties and the matters of government, God so ordained that David should live at the court of Saul and be brought into daily contact with him. What is that attribute of God by which He knows how to dispose of all things so as best to attain His end? What do you mean by saying "God is all-wise"? God promised through the dying patriarch Jacob that the tribe of Juda should bear the sceptre until about the time of the coming of the Saviour. Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, but with David the sceptre came to the tribe of Juda. What is that attribute of God by which He will surely keep His promises and execute His threats? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"?

E. *Moral Application.*—Seek to become ever more and more virtuous, adorn your soul and not your body. Virtue is far more precious than wealth, beauty or talents. God looks not upon beauty of face, form or clothing, but upon the heart and the virtues it contains. Strive then for that priceless beauty of the soul which will last for all eternity. "He that is just let him be justified still; and he that is holy let him be sanctified still" (Apoc. xxii. 11).

LVI.—GOLIATH CHALLENGES ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN BY DAVID.

A. Preparation.—The Philistines again made war with the Israelites. Among the Philistines there was a giant by name Goliath, of whom the whole of Israel was in fear. David fights with him and slays him.

B. Narration.—(a) Goliath's challenge. (b) David's daring resolve. (c) Preparation for the battle. (d) The happy outcome.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. And there went out a man baseborn from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath, of Geth, whose height was six cubits and a span: And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred sicles of iron: and his armourbearer went before him. And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel, and said to them: Why are you come out prepared to fight? am not I a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand. If he be able to fight with me and kill me, we will be servants to you: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, you shall be servants, and shall serve us. Now the Philistine came out morning and evening and presented himself forty days. And Isai said to David his son: Take for thy brethren an ephi of frumenty, and these ten loaves, and run to the camps to thy brethren." "And David leaving the vessels which he had brought, under the care of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the place of the battle and asked if all things went well with his brethren. And as he talketh with them, that baseborn man whose name was Goliath, the Philistine of Geth, shewed himself coming up from the camps of the Philistines: and he spoke according to the same words, and David heard them. And all the Israelites when they saw the man, fled from his face, fearing him exceedingly. (b) And David said to Saul: Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, or a bear, and took a ram out of the midst of the flock: And I pursued after them, and struck them, and delivered it out of their mouth: and they rose up against me, and I caught them by the throat, and I strangled and killed them. For I thy servant have killed both a lion and a bear: And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be also as one of them. I will go now, and take away the reproach of the people: For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, who hath dared to curse the army of the living God? And David said: The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David: Go and the Lord be with thee. (c) And he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine. (d) And the Philistine said to David: Am I a dog, that thou comest

to me with a staff? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And David said to the Philistine: Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel which thou hast defied. This day, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee: and I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: For it is His battle, and He will deliver you into our hands. And when the Philistine arose and was coming, and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste, and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. And he put his hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling, and fetching it about, struck the Philistine in the forehead: and the stone was fixed in his forehead, and he fell on his face upon the earth. And David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and a stone, and he struck, and slew the Philistine. And as David had no sword in his hand, He ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing that their champion was dead, fled away. (e) And the children of Israel returning, after they had pursued the Philistines fell upon their camp. And when David was returned, after the Philistine was slain, Abner (the captain of the army) took him and brought him in before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand (I. Kings xvii. 3, 4, 7-9, 16, 17, 22-24, 34-37, 40, 43, 45-51, 53, 57).

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Pride and Humility*. Goliath depended upon his own strength; scorning the Israelites, he scoffed at the one true God. He sinned through pride. When do we sin by pride? David on the contrary was humble. Not upon himself in his own strength did he build, but cast himself entirely upon the Lord. What an example of perfect confidence in God! "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel which thou hast defied." God punished the proud Goliath in that He allowed him to be overcome. He rewarded the humility of David, giving to him the victory, thereby also drawing towards him the people of Israel who gave to him their gratitude and affection; thus was the way preparing for David's advent to the throne. 2. *Permissible Homicide*. By the fifth commandment it is forbidden to kill. Did David sin in killing Goliath? Is it ever permissible to take the life of another? 3. *Envy*. David's good fortune and the gratitude of the people toward him, for his success in slaying the dread giant Goliath, caused Saul to be filled with envy. What sin did Saul commit? When do we sin by envy?

E. *Moral Application*.—"By the envy of the devil death came

into the world; and they follow him that are of his side" (Wisd. ii. 24, 25). "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Eccles. x. 15). Beware, then, my good children, of envy and of pride, two sins of the devil. Be humble and charitable. If you are more gifted mentally or in temporal goods than your neighbor, remember through whom these gifts were obtained and use them in His service. If you are poor and lowly in this world, envy not those more richly endowed, but picture the humble home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and strive to follow in their footsteps.

LVII.—THE FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.

A. *Preparation*.—Jonathan, the son of Saul, was filled with love for David and all through his life proved the unselfish beauty and loyalty of his friendship.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jonathan meets David and is filled with love for him. (b) Saul's envy and the friendship of Jonathan and David. (c) David is sent away by Jonathan to shield him from the enmity of Saul. David's generosity. (d) The death of Jonathan and Saul. (e) The sorrow of David.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And Saul said to David: Young man, of what family art thou? And David said: I am the son of thy servant Isai, the Bethlehemite. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would not let him return to his father's house. And David and Jonathan made a covenant, for he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the coat with which he was clothed and gave it to David, and the rest of his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. (b) Now when David returned after he slew the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with timbrels of joy, and cornets, and the women sung as they played, and they said: Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was exceeding angry, and this word was displeasing in his eyes, and he said: They have given David ten thousands, and to me they have given but a thousand; what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul did not look on David with a good eye from that day and forward. And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, the son of Saul, loved David exceedingly. And Jonathan told David, saying: Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee: wherefore look to thyself, I beseech thee, in the morning, and thou shalt abide in a secret place and shalt be hid. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art: and I will speak of thee to my father, and whatsoever I shall see, I will tell thee.

And Jonathan spoke good things of David to Saul his father: and said to him: Sin not, O king, against thy servant, David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and his works are very good towards thee. And he put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought great salvation for all Israel. Thou sawest it and didst rejoice. Why therefore wilt thou sin against innocent blood by killing David, who is without fault? And when Saul heard this he was appeased with the words of Jonathan, and swore: As the Lord liveth he shall not be slain. Then Jonathan called David and told him all these words: and Jonathan brought in David to Saul, and he was before him, as he had been yesterday and the day before. And the evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul (that is he was again filled with envy and hatred toward David and tried by every means to cause his death). (c) But David fled from Najoth, which is in Ramatha, and came and said to Jonathan: What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin against thy father, that he seeketh my life? And he said to him: God forbid, thou shalt not die: For my father will do nothing great or little without first telling me. And Jonathan said to David: Whatsoever thy soul shall say to me, I will do for thee. And David said to Jonathan: If thy father look and inquire for me, thou shalt answer him: David asked me that he might run to Bethlehem, his own city: because there are solemn sacrifices there for all his tribe. If he shall say, it is well: thy servant shall have peace, but if he be angry, know that his malice is come to its height. So David was hid in the field, and Saul said to Jonathan his son: Why cometh not the son of Isai to meat neither yesterday, nor to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul: He asked leave of me earnestly to go to Bethlehem. Then Saul, being angry against Jonathan, said to him: Do I not know that thou lovest the son of Isai to thy own confusion. For as long as the son of Isai liveth upon earth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Therefore now presently send and fetch him to me: for he is the son of death (that is, one that deserveth death, and shall surely die). And Jonathan understood that it was determined by his father to kill David. So Jonathan rose from the table in great anger, and did not eat bread on the second day after the new moon. For he was grieved for David. And when the morning came, Jonathan went into the field according to the appointment with David. David rose out of his place, and falling on his face to the ground, adored thrice: and kissing one another, they wept together. And Jonathan said to David: Go in peace: and let all stand that we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord. And David arose, and departed: and Jonathan went into the city. But David abode in the desert in strongholds, and he remained in a mountain of the desert of Ziph, in a woody hill. And Saul sought him always: but the Lord delivered him not into his hands. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life. And Jonathan, the son of Saul, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hands in God: and he said to him: Fear not, for the hand of my father Saul shall not find thee, and thou shalt reign over Israel, and I shall be next to thee, yea, and my father knoweth this: And the two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood: but Jonathan returned to his house. Then David went up from thence and dwelt in strongholds of Engaddi. And when Saul was returned from fol-

lowing the Philistines, they told him, saying: Behold, David is in the desert of Engaddi. Saul therefore took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went out to seek after David, and his men, even upon the most craggy rocks, which are accessible only to wild goats. And there was a cave into which Saul went, now David and his men lay hid in the inner part of the cave. And the servants of David said to him: Behold the day, of which the Lord said to thee: I will deliver thy enemy unto thee, and thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good in thy eyes. Then David arose, and secretly cut off the hem of Saul's robe. After which David's heart struck him because he had cut off the hem of Saul's robe (with remorse, as fearing he had done amiss). And David stopped his men with his words and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rising up out of the cave, went on his way. And David also rose up after him: And going out of the cave cried after Saul, saying: my lord the king. And said to Saul: Why dost thou hear the words of men that say: David seeketh thy hurt? Moreover, see and know, O, my father, the hem of thy robe in my hand, that when I cut off the hem of thy robe, I would not put out my hand against thee. Reflect, and see, that there is no evil in my hand, nor iniquity, neither have I sinned against thee: but thou liest in wait for my life, to take it away. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord revenge me of thee: but my hand shall not be upon thee. (He refers his whole cause to God to judge and punish according to His justice: yet so as to keep himself in the mean time, from all personal hatred to Saul, or desire of gratifying his own passion, by seeking revenge. So far from it that when Saul was afterward slain, we find that instead of rejoicing at his death he mourned most bitterly for him.) And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David: Thou art more just than I: for thou hast done good to me, and I have rewarded thee with evil. The Lord delivered me into thy hand, and thou hast not killed me. And the Philistines fought against Israel. And the Philistines fell upon Saul, and upon his sons, and they slew Jonathan, and Abinadab and Melchiser, the sons of Saul. And the whole weight of the battle was turned upon Saul: and the archers overtook him, and he was grievously wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armourbearer: Draw thy sword, and kill me. And his armourbearer would not. Then Saul took his sword and fell upon it. And when the armourbearer saw this, to wit, that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. (e) And on the third day, there appeared a man who came out of Saul's camp, with his garments rent and dust strewed on his head: and when he came to David he fell upon his face and adored. He said: The people are fled from the battle, and many are fallen and dead: moreover Saul and Jonathan his son are slain. Then David took hold of his garments and rent them. And David made this kind of lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son. Consider, O Israel, for them that are dead, wounded on thy high places. The illustrious of Israel are slain upon thy mountains: how are the valiant fallen. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the valiant, the arrow of Jonathan never turned back. Saul and Jonathan, lovely and comely in their life, even in death they were not divided: How are the valiant fallen in battle? Jonathan slain in the high places? I grieve for thee my brother Jonathan:

exceedingly beautiful, and amiable to me above the love of women. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee" (I. Kings xvii. 58; xviii. 1-4, 6-9; xix. 1-7, 9; xx. 1, 2, 4-7, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33-35, 41-43; xxiii. 14-18; xxiv. 1-6, 8-10, 12, 13, 17-19; xxxi. 1-5; II. i. 2, 4, 11, 17-19, 22, 23, 25, 26).

D. Commentary.—1. *The Friendship of David and Jonathan.*

We see by this touchingly beautiful chapter of the Bible how God blesses the pure love and friendship of two souls. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David." Which are the chief commandments that include all the others? What kind of love should we have for our neighbor? David and Jonathan loved God with their whole heart above all things; then came in God and through God their love for each other. How perfect was this love, how sincere, how active, how disinterested! How God must have smiled upon it! Did Christ Himself not give us a perfect example of friendship in His great love for St. John? "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John xiii. 34). "And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity (love)" (I. Cor. xiii. 13). 2. *David's Love for His Enemy.* Saul was a most dangerous enemy to David, continually seeking the means to obtain his death. Yet David loved him with a Christian love and sought not to be revenged upon him though the opportunity was in his hand. When is our love for our neighbor universal? Why must we love all, even our enemies? "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). 3. *The Fifth Commandment.* Saul was filled with envy, hence hated and sought to kill David. Anger, hatred and envy are forbidden by the fifth commandment. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I. John iii. 15). "Saul took his sword and fell upon it." Hence he took his own life. What does God forbid by this fifth commandment? When do we injure ourselves bodily? 4. *God's Justice and Wisdom.* God rewarded David for his virtues in that He protected his life in all the dangers which Saul prepared for him. Saul was punished by God for his sins. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? God wished to prepare David for his position as king over Israel, therefore he allowed him to undergo much suffering that his virtues might be tested and strengthened. God knows how to dispose of all things so as best to obtain His end. What do you mean by saying "God is all-wise"?

E. Moral Application.—My dear young people, there is nothing in this life more beautiful, more consoling, more helpful than true friendship. It helps us on in our love and service to God—in our duties to our fellow man and in our fight against temptations and in the discouragement due to our falls. Choose then wisely your friends, not for their standing in society, not for their earthly wealth, not for beauty of face or form. They may be of the humblest origin, poor in this world's possessions and not fair to look upon in the sight of man; but if they possess nobility of character they are truly noble; if unselfish, possessed of high ideals, lofty aims, then truly rich; if filled with the love of God and Christian love of their neighbor, then truly beautiful in God's sight. If you have found such a friend prize him or her above all earthly treasures. Be loyal, true at all costs. Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I. Cor. viii. 7). A loving friend will help and comfort us in all our trials, all our sorrows, rejoice with us in all our joys. Each will help the other onward, upward through the battles and discouragements of life, like Jonathan and David, till eternally happy and at rest with God the father of us all.

LVIII.—DAVID, THE PIOUS GOD-ENLIGHTENED KING.

A. Preparation.—Saul now being dead David could ascend to the throne. We shall now see how this came about and how David acted when king.

B. Narration.—(a) David as king over all Israel. (b) The tabernacle is erected upon Sion. (c) David's regulations for God's service. (d) His prophecies.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Then all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron, saying: Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh. Moreover yesterday also and the day before, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that did lead out and bring in Israel: and the Lord said to thee: Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. The ancients also of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David to be king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years (from 1055-1015 B. C.). But David took the castle of Sion, the same is the city of David. And David dwelt in the castle, and called it the city of David: and built around about from Mello and inward. And he went on prospering and growing up, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. And David knew that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel,

and that he had exalted his kingdom over his people Israel. (His kingdom was largely increased. The Euphrates, the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Arabian and Syrian deserts bounded his kingdom.) (b) And David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went, with all the people that were with him of the men of Juda to fetch the ark of God, upon which the name of the Lord of hosts is invoked, who sitteth over it upon the cherubims. And they laid the ark of God upon a new cart: and took it out of the house of Abinadab, who was in Gabaa: and Oza and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. (Gabaa, the hill of Cariathiarim, where the ark had been in the house of Abinadab, from the time of its being restored back by the Philistines.) But David and all Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of wood, on harps and lutes and timbrels and cornets and cymbals. And the ark of the Lord abode in the house of Obbededom the Gethite three months: and the Lord blessed Obbededom, and all his household. So David went, and brought away the ark of God out of the house of Obbededom into the city of David with joy. And there were with David seven choirs (companies of musicians) and calves for victims. And David danced with all his might before the Lord: And David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting, and with sound of trumpet. And they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle, which David had pitched for it: And David offered holocausts, and peace offerings before the Lord. And when he had made an end of offering holocausts and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts (II. Kings v. 1-4, 7, 9, 10, 12; vi. 1-3, 5, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18). (c) David divided the priests into twenty-four classes and these were to have charge of the sacred services for a week at a time by regular turns. God inspired David to compose his canticles and made known to him many future events. The book which contains the inspired writings of David is called "The Book of Psalms." It contains one hundred and fifty psalms. (d) Many prophecies were made by David in these beautiful psalms. They are divided into "Psalms of Praise," in which God is glorified and thanked for all his benefits. "Penitential psalms," in which the psalmist begs God for mercy and forgiveness for sin. And the "prophetical psalms," which contain prophecies pertaining to the Messiah and in which the establishment of the Church of the New Testament, the Church of Christ, is prefigured by the benefits bestowed on the people of Israel.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *David's Virtues.* (a) Zeal for the honor of God. David loved God, and therefore was most zealous in his efforts to have Him honored. He built a beautiful new tabernacle to replace the old one which had fallen into decay. He arranged the divine service that it might be celebrated with greater regularity and beautified it by introducing sacred songs with their accompaniments on harps, lutes, timbrels, cornets and cymbals. This beautifying of the divine service edified the worshippers and increased their devotion. He set a good example to all and taught his people thereby

to faithfully observe the first commandment. What is the first commandment?¹ What does God command by this first commandment? How many kinds of honor do we owe God? How do we honor God interiorly? (b) His love of justice. Each of his subjects should have justice shown unto him; therefore this pious king gave his personal attention to the administration of justice. In serious disputes he decided the case, in others he left the decision to the 6,000 Levites appointed for this purpose. 2. *The Prophecies Concerning the Messias*. Although David lived more than 1,000 years before our Saviour, nevertheless by the inspiration of God he foretold many things concerning the Messias which were accomplished in Christ Jesus. He foretold that the Messias would be disowned by the Jews, and would convert all nations. Who was disowned by the Jews and converted all nations? That the Messias would be betrayed by one of his disciples; that His enemies would spit upon His face; that they would mock Him in His agony; that they would pierce His hands and feet; that they would cast lots for His garments; that they would give Him vinegar to drink; all this was done to our Divine Saviour and to no other but Him. David also announced that the Messias would rise from the tomb without seeing corruption; Christ rose from the tomb without seeing corruption, and to Him only can this prophecy be applied. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is the Messias foretold by David. 3. *The Saviour the Son of God and a Descendant of David*. God promised David that the Saviour who was to be the Son of God was to be born of the race of David. "And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will raise up thy seed after thee—and I will establish his kingdom—He shall build a house to my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be my son" (II. Kings vii. 12-14). Our Lord Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of David. (True God and true man.) He is the builder of the true temple, which is the Church, His everlasting kingdom, which shall never fail.

E. *Moral Application*.—Like the pious king, David, be ever most zealous in all that pertains to the honor of God. Always observe the Lord's day in gratitude to God and for His honor. Let nothing tempt you to miss Mass on Sundays and feasts of obligation. Be most reverent and attentive when in God's House. Thus you will edify and set a good example to your neighbor.

LIX.—DAVID'S FALL AND REPENTANCE.

A. *Preparation*.—Although David was so good and pious he once fell into a grievous sin.

B. *Narration*.—(a) David's fall. (b) The prophet Nathan. David's repentance.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And it came to pass at the return of the year, at the time when kings go forth to war, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they spoiled the children of Ammon and besieged Rabba; but David remained in Jerusalem. (This was the war against the Ammonites in the land east of the Jordan.) In the mean time it happened that David arose from his bed after noon, and walked upon the roof of the king's house. (The houses in the Orient have flat roofs, upon which one can take a walk. Surrounding the edge of the roof is a balustrade.) And he saw from the roof of his house a woman, over against him; and the woman was very beautiful. And the king sent, and inquired who the woman was. And it was told him, that she was Bethsabee, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Urias the Hethite (Urias was a vice-commandant of the troops that had gone to war under the general-in-chief Joab). And David sent to Joab, saying: Send me Urias the Hethite. And Joab sent Urias to David. And when the morning was come, David wrote a letter to Joab: and sent it by the hand of Urias, writing in the letter: Set ye Urias in the front of the battle, where the fight is strongest: and leave ye him, that he may be wounded and die. (David thus wished him to be killed, that he might obtain his wife for himself.) Wherefore as Joab was besieging the city, he put Urias in the place where he knew the bravest men were. And the men coming out of the city, fought against Joab, and there fell some of the people of the servants of David, and Urias the Hethite was killed also. And the wife of Urias heard that Urias her husband was dead, and she mourned for him. And the mourning being over, David sent and brought her into his house, and she became his wife, and she bore him a son: and this thing which David had done was displeasing to the Lord. (II. Kings xi. 1-3, 6, 14-17, 26, 27). (b) "And the Lord sent Nathan to David: and when he was come to him he said to him: Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel: I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee from the hand of Saul. Why therefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in my sight? Thou hast killed Urias the Hethite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Urias the Hethite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord: Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house. And David said to Nathan: I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David: The Lord also hath taken away thy sin:

thou shalt not die. Nevertheless because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die. And David besought the Lord for the child: And David kept a fast, and going in by himself lay upon the ground. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died, and David said: While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept for him: for I said: who knoweth whether the Lord may not give him to me, and the child may live? But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather: but he shall not return to me" (xii. 1, 7, 9-11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22).

D. Commentary.—1. *David's Sins, their Cause and the Means to Avoid them.* David saw the wife of Urias and saw that she was beautiful. Instead of turning aside his glance he looked upon her until he coveted her for himself. In coveting the wife of his neighbor David sinned against the ninth commandment. What is the ninth commandment? Instead of controlling his evil desire David sent for the wife of Urias in order that he might tempt her to be untrue to her husband. David broke the sixth commandment. What is the sixth commandment? David scandalized the wife of Urias, thereby breaking the fifth commandment. What does God forbid by this fifth commandment? When do we injure our neighbor spiritually? When do we scandalize our neighbor? Is scandal a great sin? David commanded Joab to place Urias in the front of the battle that he might be killed. Therefore he caused the death of Urias. In this he sinned against the command "Thou shalt not kill." When do we injure our neighbor bodily? In ordering Joab to place Urias where he would surely be killed, David caused him to sin. How many ways are there of being accessory to another's sin? When are we answerable for another's sin? Impurity or lust is one of the seven capital or deadly sins. This sin was the source of all David's other sins. Which are the seven capital or deadly sins? Why are they called capital sins? How did it happen that so pious, God-enlightened king as David could fall into so grievous sin? (a) Because he remained at home in idleness instead of going to battle with his troops. (b) Because he kept not sufficient watch upon himself nor tried to control the curiosity of his eyes nor his evil desires. What should we especially avoid as dangerous to holy purity? What should we do to preserve our purity?

2. *Attributes of God.* (a) His holiness. "And this thing which David had done was displeasing to the Lord." Why? Because God hates all that is evil. What is this attribute of God? What do you

mean by saying "God is holy"? (b) His omniscience. Although David had sinned in secret, it was known by God, who sent the prophet Nathan to charge him with his secret sins. What is that attribute of God by which He knows all things? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? (c) His goodness. Nathan told David of all the benefits God had bestowed upon him. What is that attribute of God by which He bestows His blessings upon us? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? (d) His omnipresence. "Why therefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in my sight?" What is that attribute of God by which He is in all places? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? (e) His justice. "Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will raise up evil against thee." These evils, inasmuch as they were punishments, came upon David, by a just judgment of God, for his sin. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? (f) His mercy. In deep contrition David acknowledged his sin: "I have sinned against the Lord." Therefore Nathan said to him: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sin." What is that attribute of God by which He pardons the penitent sinner? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? 3. *True Conversion.* David saw the grievousness of his sins and his shameful ingratitude toward God. He acknowledged, in contrition, "I have sinned against the Lord," and ceased not until his death to weep in sorrow for his transgressions. David *knew* his sins, was *heartily sorry* for them and *sincerely resolved* to commit them no more; he acknowledged them to Nathan, and throughout the remainder of his life did penance for them in order to *satisfy* God's justice. His conversion and penance being most sincere he received pardon for his sins. How many things are required on our part to receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily?

E. *Moral Application.*—David would surely not have fallen into so grievous sins had he been watchful and had he not been spending his time in idleness. If you do not wish to be so unhappy as David be watchful over your senses and beware of idleness. Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do.

LX.—ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY AND PUNISHMENT.

A. *Preparation.*—In punishment for David's sins Our Lord had said: "I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house." Absalom, a son of David, conspired against his father, the king.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Absalom's conspiracy. (b) David's flight. (c) Absalom's defeat and end. (d) David's sorrow and return.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "But in all Israel there was not a man so comely, and so exceedingly beautiful as Absalom: from the sole of the foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. (That is, his body was without blemish.) And Absalom rising up early stood by the entrance of the gate, and when any man had business to come to the king's judgment, Absalom called to him, and said: Of what city art thou? He answered and said: Thy servant is of such a tribe of Israel. And Absalom answered him: Thy words seem to me good and just. But there is no man appointed by the king to hear thee. And Absalom said: O that they would make me judge over the land, that all that have business might come to me, that I might do them justice. Moreover when any man came to him to salute him, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And this he did to all Israel that came for judgment, to be heard by the king, and he enticed the hearts of the men of Israel. (He flattered the people and gave them to think that they would have much better times were he king in order to draw their allegiance from David to himself.) And Absalom sent spies into all the tribes of Israel, saying: As soon as you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, say ye: Absalom reigneth in Hebron. Now there went with Absalom two hundred men out of Jerusalem that were called, going with simplicity of heart and knowing nothing of the design. (b) And there came a messenger to David, saying: All Israel with their whole heart followeth Absalom. And David said to his servants, that were with him in Jerusalem: Arise and let us flee: for we shall not escape else from the face of Absalom: make haste to go out, lest he come and overtake us, and bring ruin upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said to him: Whatsoever our lord the king shall command, we thy servants will willingly execute. And the king went forth, and all his household on foot: And they all wept with a low voice, and all the people passed over: the king also went over the brook Cedron (east of Jerusalem, between the city and Mount Olivet), and all the people marched toward the way that looketh to the desert. (c) And David having reviewed his people, appointed over them captains of thousands and of hundreds. And the people of Israel were defeated there by David's army, and a great slaughter was made that day of twenty thousand men. And it happened that Absalom met the servants of David, riding on a mule: and as the mule went under a thick and large oak, his head stuck in the oak: and while he hung between the heaven and the earth, the mule on which he rode passed on. And one saw this and told Joab, saying: I saw Absalom hanging upon an oak. And Joab said to the man that told him: If thou sawest him, why didst thou not stab him to the ground, and I would have given thee ten sicles of silver, and a belt? And he said to Joab: If thou wouldst have paid down in my hand a thousand pieces of silver, I would not lay my hands upon the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abisai, and Ethai, saying: Save me the boy Absalom, and Joab said: not as thou wilt but I will set upon him in thy sight. So he took three lances in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absa-

lom: and whilst he yet panted for life, sticking on the oak, ten young men armourbearers of Joab, ran up, and striking him slew him. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the forest, and they laid an exceeding great heap of stones upon him: but all Israel fled to their own dwellings. (d) And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman that was on the top of the gate upon the wall, lifting up his eyes, saw a man running alone. And the watchman said: The running of the foremost seemeth to me like the running of Achimaas, the son of Sadoc. And the king said: He is a good man: and cometh with good news. And Achimaas crying out, said to the king: God save thee, O king, and falling down before the king with his face to the ground, he said: Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath shut up the men that have lifted up their hands against the lord my king. And the king said: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Achimaas said: I saw a great tumult, O king, when thy servant Joab sent me thy servant: I know nothing else. And the king said to him: Pass and stand here. And when he had passed, and stood still, Chusai appeared: and coming up he said: I bring good tidings, my lord, the king. And the king said to Chusai: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Chusai, answering him, said: Let the enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against him unto evil, be as the young man is. The king therefore being much moved, went up to the high chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went he spoke in this manner: My son Absalom, Absalom my son: Would to God that I might die for thee Absalom my son, my son Absalom. And the king returned and came as far as the Jordan, and all Juda came as far as Galgal to meet the king, and to bring him over the Jordan."

D. Commentary.—1. *The Fourth Commandment.* Punishments for the violation of the same. Absalom sinned grievously against the fourth commandment. (a) Against the reverence he owed his father (in that he spoke ill of him). (b) Against the love he owed him (in that he deeply grieved him). (c) Against the obedience he owed him (in that he would not obey him or listen to his advice, but conspired against him). What does God command by this fourth commandment? When do children sin against the reverence they owe their parents? When do children sin against the love they owe their parents? When do children sin against the obedience they owe their parents? Just punishment was not long in overtaking Absalom for his sins. The battle which he waged against his father was unsuccessful. In his flight he remained hanging to the branch of a tree and underwent much suffering, until at last his unfilial, ungrateful heart was pierced by the lance. So he met with a shameful death. His grave was filled in with stones, and to-day yet this spot is held as an accursed place. Therefore the wicked son Absalom met with shame and disgrace while in this world and the curse of God in the next. What awaits those who grievously fail to do their

duty toward their parents? 2. *God's Faithfulness and Justice.* God made known to David through His prophet Nathan: "Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." This was fulfilled in the conspiracy of Absalom against his father. What is that attribute of God by which He will surely keep His promises and execute His threats? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? Absalom grievously sinned against his father. Therefore he was overtaken by a just punishment. What is that attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked according to each one's deserts? What do you mean by saying "God is just"?

E. *Moral Application.*—May the dreadful punishment of Absalom impress upon you the seriousness of violating the fourth commandment. Have you spoken ill of your parents, grieved or disobeyed them? Then form the firm resolution from now on never again to commit these sins, but to honor, love and obey your parents, pastors, teachers and all your superiors and show them the gratitude which is their due.

LXI.—DAVID'S LAST ADMONITIONS AND HIS DEATH.

A. *Preparation.*—David had grown old. His end was approaching. Before his death he gave beautiful admonitions to his son Solomon, and to all the Israelites.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The contemplated building of the Temple. (b) David's admonitions. (c) His death.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "David said to Nathan the prophet: Dost thou see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God is lodged within skins? But it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: Go, and say to my servant David: Thus saith the Lord: Shalt thou build me a house to dwell in? And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers I will raise up thy seed after thee—and I will establish his kingdom. (This prophecy partly relateth to Solomon; but much more to Christ, who is called the son of David in Scripture, and who is the builder of the true temple, which is the Church; His everlasting kingdom which shall never fail.) He shall build a house to my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (II. Kings vii. 2, 4, 5, 12, 13). "And David said to Solomon: My son, it was my desire to have built a house to the name of the Lord my God. But the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Thou hast shed much blood, and fought many battles, so thou canst not build a house to my name, after shedding so much blood before me: The

son that shall be born to thee, shall be a most quiet man; for I will make him rest from all his enemies round about: And therefore he shall be called Peaceable (Solomon), and I will give peace and quietness to Israel all his days. He shall build a house to my name, and he shall be a son to me, and I will be a father to him: And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever. (b) Now then my son, the Lord be with thee, and do thou prosper, and build the house to the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken of thee. The Lord also give thee wisdom and understanding, that thou mayest be able to rule Israel, and to keep the law of the Lord thy God. For then thou shalt be able to prosper, if thou keep the commandments, and judgments, which the Lord commanded Moses to teach Israel: take courage and act manfully, fear not, nor be dismayed. And David, being old and full of days, made Solomon his son king over Israel. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, and the priests and Levites, and standing said: Now then before all the assembly of Israel, in the hearing of our God, keep ye and seek all the commandments of the Lord our God: that you may possess the good land, and may leave it to your children after you for ever. And thou my son Solomon know the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the thoughts of minds. If thou seek him, thou shalt find Him: but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever. And king David said to all the assembly: Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is as yet young and tender: and the work is great (that is, it is a great undertaking to build a house for the Lord), for a house is prepared not for man, but for God. And I with all my ability have prepared the expenses for the house of my God. Gold for vessels of gold, and silver for vessels of silver, brass for things of brass, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood: and onyx stones and stones like alabaster, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble of paros in great abundance. Now, over and above the things which I have offered into the house of my God, I give of my own proper goods. Now, if any man is willing to offer, let him fill his hand to-day and offer what he pleaseth to the Lord. And the people rejoiced when they promised their offerings willingly: because they offered them to the Lord with all their heart (not for wordly gain or the opinion of their fellow men, but with simplicity in their love for God and His glory). And David the king rejoiced also with a great joy. And he blessed the Lord before all the multitude, and he said: Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of Israel, our father, from eternity to eternity. Thine, O Lord, is magnificence, and power, and glory, and victory: And to thee is praise: for all that is in heaven, and in earth, is thine: Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art above all princes. Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to promise thee all these things? All things are thine: and we have given thee what we have received of thy hand. For we are sojourners before thee, and strangers, as were all our fathers. Our days upon earth are as shadows and there is no stay. I know, my God, that thou provest hearts, and lovest simplicity, wherefore I also in the simplicity of my heart, have joyfully offered all these things: and I have seen with great joy thy people, which are here present, offer thee their offerings. (c) So David, the son of Isai, reigned

over all Israel. And the days that he reigned over Israel were forty years: In Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem three and thirty years. And he died in a good old age, full of days, and riches and glory. And Solomon his son reigned in his stead." (He died then at the age of seventy years, having ascended to the throne at the age of thirty and reigned during forty years.) (Par. xxii. 7-13; xxiii. 1, 2; xxviii. 2, 8, 9; xxix. 1-3, 5, 9-11, 14, 15, 17, 26-28).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His omniscience. "For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the thoughts of minds" (Par. xxviii. 9). God knows all things, even the most secret thoughts. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? (b) His holiness. David could not build a house for God, because he was a man of blood, that is a warrior, slaying many in battle, and especially owing to his sinfulness in causing Urias to be slain. This being displeasing in the sight of God He would not accept a house from his hands. Which is that attribute of God by which He loves and wills only what is good, and hates all that is evil? What do you mean by saying "God is holy"? (c) His justice. David said to his son: "If thou seek him thou shalt find him: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (xxviii. 9). What is that attribute of God by which He rewards the good and punishes the wicked? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *Review of David's Life.* According to God's providence tasks of especial importance were given to David. (a) He was to secure for the Israelites their possession of the Promised Land. This he achieved through his many and victorious battles by which all his enemies were overcome. (b) He was to establish the unity and concord of the twelve tribes. This he did by regulating the divine service, as well as by the wisdom and justice of his laws. He was an exceptionally important instrument in the land of divine Providence. That he so well fulfilled all the tasks set for him, making of his life's work one great success, was due to his eminent virtues, among which his humility, his confidence in God, his piety, his zeal for God's honor, his love for his neighbor and for his enemy, his justice and generosity, take the foremost rank. 3. *David a Figure of the Messias.* David was born in Bethlehem; Our Lord was born in Bethlehem. David was a shepherd, and, armed only with a sling and shepherd's crook, slew the giant Goliath; Our Lord, the divine shepherd, with only His cross vanquished the devil. David in return for the love and benefits he had showered upon Saul received only his ingratitude, hatred and enmity; our divine Lord,

for His infinite love and countless blessings, received the blackest ingratitude of mankind. David sinned, and to atone for his sins was obliged to go out of Jerusalem; Our Lord, though innocence itself, to atone for the sins of the world, was conducted out of Jerusalem. David crossed the torrent Cedron, weeping; Our Lord penetrated with grief crossed the same Cedron. David went up to Mount Olivet; Our Lord also ascended Mount Olivet on the eve of His bitter suffering and death on the cross. David was accompanied by a small number of faithful servants; Our Lord was followed by His holy Mother, St. John and a small number of pious souls. David in his affliction was insulted by Semei, whom he forbade his followers to injure; Our Lord, on the cross, was insulted by the Jews, for whom He prayed. David returned in triumph and received the homage of his subjects; Our Lord rose in triumph from the tomb and received the homage of the whole world.

E. Moral Application.—One of the beautiful exhortations of David to his son Solomon, "Know the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind," applies also to you. The very first lesson taught to you in the Catechism is that you must know God, love Him and serve Him. Observe most faithfully the commandments of God in every detail. Fulfill willingly, gladly, all that God asks of you, and you, too, will gain eternal happiness and see God face to face.

LXII.—SOLOMON'S PRAYER AND WISE DECISION.

A. Preparation.—Solomon now reigned as king over Israel and God was with him. Shortly after the beginning of his reign God appeared to him by night and asked of him what gift he desired. Solomon begged for the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, which were bestowed upon him.

B. Narration.—(a) Solomon's prayer for wisdom and the granting of the same. (b) The dispute between the two women. (c) Solomon's wise judgment.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, saying: Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee. And Solomon said: Thou hast shewn great mercy to thy servant David, my father, even as he walked before thee in truth and justice, and an upright heart with thee: and thou hast kept thy great mercy for him, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day. (Although anointed king during his father's

lifetime, Solomon reigned only after David's death.) And now, O Lord God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a child and know not how to go out and come in. (By these words Solomon shows his humility. He was now twenty years of age.) And thy servant is in the midst of the people which thou hast chosen, an immense people, which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, thy people which is so numerous? And the word was pleasing to the Lord that Solomon had asked such a thing. And the Lord said to Solomon: Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life or riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but has asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment. Behold, I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart, insomuch as there hath been no one like thee before thee, nor shall arise after thee. Yea, and the things also which thou didst not ask, I have given thee: to wit, riches and glory, so that no one hath been like thee among the kings in all days heretofore. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, and keep my precepts, and my commandments, as thy father walked, I will lengthen thy days. (b) Then there came two women that were harlots to the king, and stood before him: And one of them said: I beseech thee, my Lord, I and this woman dwelt in the house, and I was delivered of a child with her in the chamber. And the third day, after that I was delivered, she also was delivered, and we were together, and no other person with us in the house, only we two. And this woman's child died in the night; for in her sleep she overlaid him. And rising in the dead time of the night, she took my child from my side, while I thy handmaid was asleep, and laid it in her bosom: and laid her dead child in my bosom. And the other woman answered: it is not so as thou sayest, but thy child is dead and mine alive. On the contrary she said: Thou liest: for my child liveth, and thy child is dead. And in this manner they strove before the king. (c) Then said the king: The one saith, my child is alive, and thy child is dead. And the other answereth: Nay but thy child is dead, and mine liveth. The king therefore said: Bring me a sword, and when they had brought a sword before the king, divide, said he, the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other. (Solomon had not the intention to slay the child, but gave this seemingly cruel command in order to distinguish the true mother, knowing that she would rather give her child into the hands of a stranger than have it lose its life.) But the woman whose child was alive said to the king (for her bowels were moved upon her child), I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive and do not kill it. But the other said: Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. (By the hardness of heart shown in this utterance she proved that she was not the mother of the child.) The king answered and said: Give the living child to this woman, and let it not be killed, for she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king, seeing that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment" (III. Kings iii. 5, 14, 16-20, 22-28).

D. Commentary.—1. *Solomon's Virtues.* (a) His humility. Solomon, though king, called himself a servant of the Lord and a child in His sight. What virtue did he accordingly possess? What virtues are especially opposed to the seven capital sins? (b) His prudence. Solomon did not pray for wealth or glory, but asked God to grant him "an understanding heart"—"to discern between good and evil," that he might always do what was right and pleasing in the sight of God. His first consideration was for the welfare of his soul and the souls of the people entrusted to him. He wished to obtain for himself and his people peace in time and happiness for all eternity. He possessed, therefore, the virtue of prudence. To which class of virtues does prudence belong? Which are the four cardinal or principal virtues on which all the other moral virtues rest? What is prudence? 2. *Envy.* The woman who in sleep had stifled her child envied the other woman her living child. When do we sin by envy? Among what class of sin is envy numbered? Why are they called capital sins? Let us see into what other sins this woman's envy led her! Through envy she was led to steal the living child from her neighbor (seventh commandment); to lie to the king (eighth commandment); and at last to desire the death of the innocent babe—"divide it" (fifth commandment). 3. *Lying.* The woman who by night had stolen the babe from its mother declared before the king that it was her own. She lied with deliberation and intent, in order to deceive the king and obtain his consent to keep the child. What is a lie?

E. Moral Application.—Learn from Solomon Christian prudence! Beg God, above all else, for spiritual gifts—piety, fear of the Lord, purity of the heart! Earthly possessions, such as honor, riches, even life itself, pass with time—the spiritual remain for life eternal! "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (Matt. vi. 19-21).

LXIII.—CONSTRUCTION AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

A. Preparation.—David had entrusted to Solomon much gold and silver with which to build a temple for God.

B.—*Narration*.—(a) Building of the Temple. (b) The dedication of the Temple. (c) Solomon's prayer and its fulfillment.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon: for he heard that they had anointed him king in the place of his father: for Hiram had always been David's friend. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying: Thou knowest the will of David my father, and that he could not build a house to the name of the Lord his God. Wherefore I purpose to build a temple to the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke to David my father, saying: Thy son, whom I will set upon the throne in thy place, he shall build a house to my name. Give orders therefore that thy servants cut me down cedar trees out of Libanus, and let my servants be with thy servants: and I will give thee the hire of thy servants whatever thou wilt ask, for thou knowest how there is not among my people a man that has skill to hew wood like to the Sidonians. And Hiram sent to Solomon saying: I have heard all thou hast desired of me: and I will do all thy desire concerning cedar trees, and fir trees. My servants shall bring them down from Libanus (see map); the wood from these cedars and firs was chosen for its sweet odor and durability and hewn by the most skilled workmen, and the most costly stones were quarried in the mountains and hewn by the masons) to the sea: and I will put them together in floats in the sea, and convey them to the place which thou shalt signify to me; and will land them there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt allow me necessities to furnish food for my household. And king Solomon chose workmen out of all Israel, and the levy was of thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Libanus, ten thousand every month by turns, so that two months they were at home. And Solomon had seventy thousand to carry burdens, and eighty thousand to hew stones. Besides the overseers who were over every work, in number three thousand and three hundred that ruled over the people, and them that did the work. And the king commanded, that they should bring great stones, costly stones, for the foundation of the temple and should square them: And the masons of Solomon and the masons of Hiram hewed them: and the Giblions prepared timber and stones to build the house. (All the parts were so prepared that they exactly fitted together, "so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was building." The fitted parts were conveyed from Libanus to Moria [see map], where the temple was built. The mountain of Moria lies in a northeasterly direction from Mount Sion and it was here that Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac.) And Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, in mount Moria, which had been shewn to David his father, in the place which David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And the house, which king Solomon built to the Lord, was threescore cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and thirty cubits in height. And there was a porch before the temple of twenty cubits in length according to the measure of the breadth of the temple: and it was ten cubits in breadth before the face of the temple. And he made in the temple oblique windows. And upon the wall of the temple he built floors round about, in the walls of the house round about the temple and the oracle, and he made sides round about,

(Chambers or cells adjoining to the Temple, for the use of the Temple and of the priests, so contrived as to be between the inward and outward wall of the Temple, in three stories one above another. The inner temple or holy of holies, where God gave his oracles.) And the house, when it was in building, was built of stones hewed and made ready: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was in building. So he built the house, and finished it and he covered the house with roofs of cedar. And he made the oracle in the midst of the house, in the inner part, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And the house before the oracle he overlaid with most pure gold, and fastened on the plates with nails of gold. And there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold: the whole altar of the oracle he covered also with gold. (b) And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place, that is to the oracle of the temple, into the holy of holies under the wings of the cherubims. Nor could the priests stand and minister by reason of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. Then Solomon said: The Lord promised that he would dwell in a cloud. But I have built a house to his name, that he might dwell there forever. (c) Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel who hath accomplished indeed that which he spoke to David my father. He said: O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven nor in earth: who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts. And now, Lord God of Israel, let thy word be established which thou hast spoken to thy servant David. Is it credible then that God should dwell with men on earth? If heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain thee, how much less this house which I have built? But to this end only is it made, that thou mayst regard the prayer of thy servant and his supplication, O Lord my God: and mayst hear the prayers which thy servant poureth out before thee. And when Solomon had made an end of his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocausts and the victims: and the majesty of the Lord filled the house. And the Lord appeared to him by night and said: I have heard thy prayer and I have chosen this place for myself for a house of sacrifice" (III. Kings v. 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13-18; II. Par. iii. 1; III. Kings vi. 2-5, 7, 9, 19, 21, 22; II. Par. v. 7, 14; vi. 1, 4, 14, 17-19; vii. 1, 12).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *God's Being and Attributes.* (a) God is infinitely perfect. Solomon said: "There is no God like thee in heaven nor in earth." "Heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain thee." God can not be likened to any being, He surpasses all; no space can bound Him, He fulfills all things. He is an infinitely perfect spirit. Who is God? Why do you say that God is infinitely perfect? (b) God's goodness and mercy. The singers lifted up their voices, saying: "Give glory to the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever." What do you mean by saying "God is good"? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? 2. *Exterior Worship.* How do we honor God exteriorly? The Israelites in sol-

emn procession carried the ark of the covenant into the Temple; Solomon fell upon his knees and lifted up his hands toward heaven in prayer; and all the Israelites fell upon their knees and prayed. How many kinds of honor do we owe to God? 3. *The Sanctity of the Temple.* The Lord sanctified the Temple. "For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." His eyes were to be opened upon the house by night and by day, and to all who prayed there He would listen.

E. *Moral Application.*—If the Temple of Solomon was so holy how much more holy is our house of God—the Catholic church. Therein is present Our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, true God and true man; daily He offers Himself for us to His heavenly Father in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Be ever reverent in your behavior when you have the happiness to be in His presence in His house. Never fail to kneel in adoration before the Divine Prisoner in the Tabernacle of the Altar.

LXIV.—SOLOMON'S WISDOM, RICHES AND GLORY. HIS DEATH.

A. *Preparation.*—Solomon asked but wisdom and God bestowed also riches and glory upon him, so that there had never been a king like unto him in all the days before. Despite his happiness and the admiration he received from all mankind, his end was sad.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Solomon's riches and glory. (b) His wisdom. (c) His sad ending.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And Solomon built his own house in thirteen years and brought it to perfection. And the foundations were of costly stones, great stones of ten cubits or eight cubits. And the weight of the gold that was brought to Solomon every year, was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. Besides that which the men brought him that were over the tributes, and the merchants, and they that sold by retail, and all the kings of Arabia, and the governors of the country. King Solomon also made a great throne of ivory: and overlaid it with the finest gold. It had six steps: and the top of the throne was round behind; and there were two hands on either side holding the seat: and two lions stood, one at each hand. And twelve little lions stood upon the six steps on the one side and on the other: there was no such work made in any kingdom. Moreover all the vessels out of which king Solomon drank were of gold: and all the furniture of the house of the forest of Libanus was of most pure gold; there was no silver, nor was any account made of it in the days of Solomon. (b) And king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the earth desired to see Solomon's face, to hear his wisdom, which God had given his heart. And the rest of the words

of Solomon and all that he did, and his wisdom behold they are all written in the book of the words, of the days of Solomon. (Being inspired by the Holy Ghost Solomon's words belong to the Holy Scriptures. In "The Book of Proverbs" he directs men to wisdom and virtue; in "Ecclesiastes," or "The Preacher," Solomon setteth forth the vanity of the things of this world: to withdraw the hearts and affections of men from such empty toys; and in the "Canticle of Canticles" he glorifies the infinite love of God.) (c) And when he was now old, his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. And Solomon did that which was not pleasing before the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as David his father. Then Solomon built a temple for Chamos the idol of Moab, on the hill that is over against Jerusalem, and for Moloch the idol of the children of Ammon. (He built the temples not because he believed in these strange gods, but for love of his pagan wives. In this manner he spread idolatry in his kingdom, making himself guilty of serious sin.) And he did in this manner for all his wives that were strangers, who burnt incense, and offered sacrifice to their gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his mind was turned away from the Lord the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. The Lord therefore said to Solomon: because thou hast done this and hast not kept my covenant, and my precepts which I have commanded thee, I will divide and rend thy kingdom and will give it to thy servant. Nevertheless in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Neither will I take away the whole kingdom, but I will give one tribe to thy son, for the sake of David my servant, and Jerusalem which I have chosen. And the days that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel, were forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father, and Roboam his son reigned in his stead" (III. Kings vii. 1, 10; x. 14, 15, 18-21, 23, 24; xi. 1, 4, 6-9, 11-13, 42, 43).

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Solomon's Sins*. It is indeed sad that a king so endowed with the grace of God should have ended his years in so inglorious a manner. In consequence of his great riches and glory he failed to have recourse to God in prayer and became (a) indifferent in faith. How do we sin against faith? (First commandment.) Because Solomon became indifferent in matters of faith (regarding God and His commandments), he took to himself pagan wives, which was forbidden by God, and for love of them built pagan temples. In doing this he was an accessory in the sin of idolatry, that is, was guilty (b) of one of the nine ways of being accessory to another's sin. Which are these nine ways? Thereby he gave also (c) scandal to his subjects. When do we injure our neighbor spiritually? When do we scandalize our neighbor? 2. *The Danger of Riches*. The depth of Solomon's fall into sin is a warning of the danger that lies in great wealth. Wealth and good

fortune drew Solomon more and more away from Our Lord, until at last he quite forgot his God and became a great sinner. People possessed of great wealth and earthly happiness easily forget God and their duty toward Him, and finally lose eternal happiness. Therefore Christ says: "For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 25). "For where thy treasure is there is thy heart also" (Matt. vi. 21). If we possess earthly treasures and use them in such a manner as through them to obtain heavenly treasures then our love for them is supernatural, therefore meritorious. 3. *God's Justice*. Because Solomon broke God's commandments he was punished by God. "Because thou hast done this, I will divide and rend thy kingdom and will give it to thy servant." What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 4. *Solomon a Figure of Christ*. Both Christ and Solomon were princes of peace and full of wisdom. Solomon built a magnificent temple to the true God; Our Saviour changes the world, which was a vast temple of idols, into a temple of the true God. On the report of the wisdom of Solomon the queen of Saba leaves her kingdom and is filled with admiration; at the name of Our Lord kings, queens, whole nations of idolaters, quit the worship of idols and admire the wisdom of the Christian law. The queen of Saba offered rich presents to Solomon, the three kings of the East brought rich presents to Jesus the Infant King.

E. *Moral Application*.—The cause of Solomon's fall was his neglect of prayer; if you do not wish also to fall into serious sin then pray daily with fervor and attention. "Watch and pray that you fall not into temptation." St. Paul says, "Pray without ceasing" (I. Thess. v. 17). Pray therefore often and with devotion both at church and at home and in your daily journeyings. Pray in peace, pray in stress, pray in joy, pray in sorrow, pray in sickness, pray in health, pray in danger, pray in temptations. Pray at all times, pray with perseverance. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you" (Luke xi. 9).

REVIEW OF THE TIMES OF THE KINGS OF THE UNDIVIDED KINGDOM.

1. Brief account of the events of this period. 2. Further developments regarding the prophecies of the Messias. 3. Figures of the

Messias. 4. Review of geographical questions. Where situated and when named: (a) Bethlehem? (b) The desert of Judea? (c) Mount Gilboa? (d) Mount Sion? (e) The brook of Cedron? (f) The woods of Ephraim? (g) Mount Moria? (h) Libanus?

LXV.—THE SENDING OF THE PROPHETS. DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (975 B. C.).

A. *Preparation*.—After the death of Solomon the word of God regarding the division of the kingdom came to pass. The Israelites again cause sorrow to God by their numerous sins and Our Lord sent among them holy men to preach penance and announce future events. These men were called prophets.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Roboam's counselors. (b) The falling off of the ten tribes. (c) Setting up of idolatry in the kingdom of Israel. (d) The prophets.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And Roboam went to Sichem: for thither were all Israel come together to make him king (members of all the tribes). And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam came and all the multitude of Israel, and they spoke to Roboam, saying: Thy father laid a grievous yoke upon us: now therefore do thou take off a little of the grievous service of thy father, and of his most heavy yoke, which he put upon us and we will serve thee. King Roboam took counsel with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and he said what counsel do you give me, that I may answer this people? They said to him: If thou wilt yield to this people to-day, and condescend to them, and grant their petition and wilt speak gentle words to them, they will be thy servants always. But he left the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men, that had been brought up with him, and stood before him. And he said to them: What counsel do you give me? And the young men who had been brought up with him said: Thus shalt thou speak to this people who have spoken to thee, saying: Thy father made our yoke heavy, do thou ease us. Thou shalt say to them: My little finger is thicker than the back of my father. And now my father put a heavy yoke upon you, but I will add to your yoke: my father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions. (b) And the king answered the people roughly, leaving the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men. Then the people seeing that the king would not hearken to them, answered him, saying: What portion have we in David? or what inheritance in the son of Isai? Go home to thy dwellings O Israel, now David look to thy own house. So Israel departed to their dwellings. (The kingdom of Israel embraced the northern portion of the Promised Land; the kingdom of Juda the southern portion.) But

as for all the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Juda, Roboam reigned over them. And Israel revolted from the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again that they gathered an assembly, and sent and called him, and made him king over all Israel, and there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Juda only. (c) And Jeroboam said in his heart: now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem: and the heart of this people will turn to their lord Roboam, the king of Juda, and they will kill me and return to him. And finding out a device he made two golden calves, and said to them: Go ye up no more to Jerusalem: Behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt. (It is likely, by making his gods in this form, he mimicked the Egyptians, among whom he had sojourned, who worshipped their Apis and their Osiris under the form of a bullock.) And he set the one in Bethel and the other in Dan. (Bethel was a city of the tribe of Ephraim in the southern part of the dominions of Jeroboam, about six leagues from Jerusalem; Dan was in the extremity of his dominion, to the north in the confines of Syria.) And this thing became an occasion of sin: for the people went to adore the calf as far as Dan. (d) And behold there came a man of God out of Juda, by the word of the Lord to Bethel. (God sent the prophets, that through their words and miracles the people might be brought to a knowledge of the evil they were committing and by repentance return to the one true God.) (III. Kings xii. 1, 3, 4, 6-11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 26-29; xiii. 1).

D. Commentary.—1. *Roboam's Evil Counselor.* The young men of whom Roboam sought counsel advised him to yet more severely oppress his people. They gave evil counsel; counseled him to commit sin. Oppression of the poor is one of the sins that cries to heaven for vengeance. Which are the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance? In giving evil counsel these young men were accessories to Roboam's sin. How many ways are there of being accessory to another's sin? 2. *Revolt against Lawful Authority.* Roboam was the lawful king over Israel. When the ten tribes fell away from him and chose their own king they revolted against lawful authority and sinned against the fourth commandment. What does God command by this fourth commandment? How do we sin against our spiritual and temporal superiors? 3. *Scandal.* In causing his people to commit idolatry Jeroboam was guilty of the sin of scandal. That is, he intentionally led his subjects into sin, injuring them spiritually. When do we injure our neighbor spiritually? When do we scandalize our neighbor? 4. *Attributes of God.* (a) His faithfulness. God had made known to Solomon that his kingdom would be given to one of his servants, only a portion being reserved for his son. This came to pass. God had kept

His promise. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? (b) His goodness and mercy. Although the people again forsook God and worshipped idols He did not forsake them, but in His divine love sent prophets among them. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? The prophets were to awaken the people to a sense of their wrong and bring them back, in the spirit of penance, to the feet of God. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? (c) His infinite power. God worked miracles by the hands of the prophets. Who only can perform miracles? Why can God alone work miracles? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"?

E. *Moral Application*.—Watch over yourselves that you do not sin against the fourth commandment. See that you bear no ill will toward your lawful superiors, speak no ill of them and be prompt in your obedience. Remember the words of Christ: "Render unto God the things that are God's and unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." *The Prophets of the Old Law*: God called up prophets and sent them out to bring the king and his people to repentance. These prophets were pious men who exhorted the people to repentance and foretold the future by the inspiration of God. God gave to them also the power of working miracles. There are two kinds of prophets; those who have not written their prophecies, as Elias and Eliseus, and those who have written them. Among the latter some are called the great prophets, because we have a greater number of their writings, such as David, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel; others are called the minor prophets, because we have fewer of their writings: Joel, Jonas, Osee, Micheas, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias, etc.

LXVI.—THE PROPHET ELIAS.

A. *Preparation*.—The godless king Joroboam had been succeeded by six different kings, each reigning for a period over Israel. During the reign of the last of these, Achab by name, whose ungodliness was in excess of that of any of the others, the prophet Elias was sent by God to redeem him and his people.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Elias by the torrent of Carith. (b) Elias at Sarephta.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “And Achab the son of Amri reigned over Israel in Samaria two and twenty years (919-897 B. C.). And Achab the son of Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. Nor was it enough for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat: but he also took to wife Jezabel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. And he went and served Baal and adored him. And he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Elias the Thesbite of the inhabitants of Galaad said to Achab: As the Lord liveth, the God of Israel, in whose sight I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to the words of my mouth. And the word of the Lord came to him, saying: Get thee hence, and go toward the East and hide thyself by the torrent of Carith, which is over against the Jordan, and there thou shalt drink of the torrent: and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according to the word of the Lord: and going, he dwelt by the torrent Carith, which is over against the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the torrent. But after some time the torrent was dried up, for it had not rained upon the earth. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying: Arise and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians (that is, a city of the Sidonians) and dwell there: for I have commanded a widow woman there to feed thee. He arose and went to Sarephta. And when he was come to the gate of the city he saw the widow woman gathering sticks, and he called her, and said to her: Give me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. Bring me also I beseech thee a morsel of bread in thy hand. And she answered as the Lord liveth I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse: behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it, for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elias said to her: Fear not, for thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: The pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished, until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth. And it came to pass after this that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and the sickness was very grievous so that there was no breath left in him. And Elias said to her: Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, hast thou afflicted also the widow, with whom I am after a sort maintained, so as to kill her son? O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body. And the Lord heard the voice of Elias: and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived. And Elias took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother, and said to her: Behold thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elias: Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true” (III. Kings xvi. 29-32; xvii. 1-14, 17, 19-24).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His omnipresence. Elias said to Achab: “As the Lord liveth the God of Israel, in whose sight I stand.” What is this attribute of God by which He is every-

where? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? (b) His infinite power. Nothing can withstand the power of God. The winds and the clouds must obey Him. By His command no rain fell in the kingdom of Israel. The ravens, at God's word, daily brought nourishment to Elias. The pot of meal and the cruse of oil were not diminished, because God so willed it, though daily they supplied the nourishment for three. By the infinite power of God Elias recalled to life the only son of the widow. What is this attribute of God? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? (c) His goodness. In God's infinite love His servant Elias was shielded from the anger of Achab and his daily needs miraculously supplied. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? (d) His justice. The long drought was a well-merited punishment for the godless king Achab and his idolatrous subjects. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *Faith, Confidence and Mercy of the Widow of Sarephta*. The widow of Serephta, although a pagan, was possessed of great and beautiful virtues. Above all her great faith. The prophet said to her she should not fear, that the meal and the oil would not diminish, and though her supply was so minute she hesitated not, but with faith in his word, coming from God, used therefrom to supply his needs. When is our faith firm? In obeying the request of Elias she also fulfilled one of the corporal works of mercy—to feed the hungry. Which are the corporal works of mercy? God rewarded the faith, confidence and mercy of the poor widow by supplying her daily bread in the time of famine and by restoring to life her only son. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." 3. *Life and Death*. The son of the widow was dead. What happens at man's death? Without the soul the body is dead. The prophet, by the help of God, wished to restore the widow's son to life. What then had to take place? Therefore Elias prayed: "Let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body."

E. *Moral Application*.—Be firm in your faith, like the widow of Sarephta. She heard the word of God as it came from the mouth of the prophet and believed it. We hear the word of God through the holy Catholic Church. Let us firmly adhere, then, to her teaching, and thank God for the grace of faith. In all your needs have confidence in God. He did not allow Elias nor the widow and her son to suffer hunger during the great famine. He clothes the flowers of the field and feeds the birds of the air. Has He not

told us that not a sparrow falls without Him? How, then, can He forget us if we are not forgetful of Him. Show, then, your confidence in God, for He will never forsake you in your need.

LXVII.—THE SACRIFICE OF ELIAS.

A. Preparation.—While Elias was yet at Sarephta, he received from God a command to visit king Achab and inform him that at last rain would fall. This Elias did, and also offered sacrifices, for which God performed a great miracle in order to convert the godless inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel.

B. Narration.—(a) Elias in the midst of the people on Mount Carmel. (b) Elias' proposition. (c) Prayer of the priests of Baal. (d) Prayer of Elias. (e) The long-desired rainfall.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And Achab said to Abdias: Go into the land unto all fountains of waters, and into all valleys, to see if we can find grass, and save the horses and mules, that the beasts may not utterly perish. (Owing to the long drought men and beasts had endured much suffering, many unto death.) And Achab came to meet Elias, and Elias said: Send now and gather unto me all Israel unto Mount Carmel (a mountain range in Samaria, extending northeast to the Mediterranean Sea), and the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves, four hundred, who eat at Jezabel's table. Achab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered together the prophets unto Mount Carmel. (b) Elias, coming to all the people, said: How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word. And Elias again said to the people: I only remain a prophet of the Lord: but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. Let two bullocks be given us, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it upon wood, but put no fire under: And I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under it. Call ye on the names of your gods, and I will call on the name of my Lord: and the god that shall answer by fire let him be God. And all the people answering, said: A very good proposal. (c) And they took the bullock which he gave them, and dressed it: and they called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying: O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered: and they leaped over the altar that they had made. (d) Elias said to the people: Come ye unto me. And the people coming near unto him, he repaired the altar of the Lord, that was broken down: And when it was now time to offer the holocaust, Elias the prophet came near and said: O Lord, God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, shew this day that thou art the God of Israel, and I thy servant, and that according to thy commandment I have done all these things. Hear me, O Lord, hear me: that this people may learn, that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart again. Then the fire

of the Lord fell, and consumed the holocaust, and the wood and the stones (the twelve stones representing the twelve tribes with which Elias built the altar) and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench (poured upon the offering and into the trench by the command of Elias, that the miracle might be the greater). And when the people saw this they fell on their faces, and they said: The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God. (e) And Elias went up to the top of Mount Carmel, and casting himself down upon the earth put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant: Go up and look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said: There is nothing. And again he said to him: Return seven times. And at the seventh time, behold a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot. And he said: Go up and say to Achab: Prepare thy chariot and go down lest the rain prevent thee. And while he turned himself this way and that way, behold the heavens grew dark with clouds and wind, and there fell a great rain. And Achab getting up went away to Jezrahel (III. Kings xviii. 5, 16, 19-26, 29, 30, 36-39, 42-45).

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His infinite power. Although the heavens were clear fire came down and consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, even the water with which they had been soaked. This was a great miracle. Who only can work miracles? What do you mean by saying "God is all-powerful"? (b) His faithfulness. God had promised the prophets that rain should again fall upon the earth. We see how God kept His promise. What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? (c) His goodness. Although the people had committed the grievous sin of idolatry and had forsaken God, He sent rain, that the great famine might cease. This was indeed a great blessing for the faithless people. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 2. *The Prayer of Elias.* Elias retired to the top of the mountain, to be alone with God. He wished his prayer to be without distraction. He bowed himself to the earth, praying with great humility. How must we pray? The fruit of the prophet's prayer was the help God sent the people in their dire necessity. What are the principal fruits of prayer? 3. *The Virtues of Elias.* (a) First, he possessed a firm, constant and living faith. While the people of Israel worshipped idols, he adored the one true God. Neither King Achab nor the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal could shake the faith of Elias. When is our faith firm? His firm faith and great confidence in God made Elias (b) implicitly obedient to God's commands, though this was not unattended with danger. Obediently he went to his enemy Achab, though he knew he sought his life. In this he showed

(c) the virtue of fortitude, being willing to bear any persecution, even the loss of his life, rather than fail in his obedience to God. What is fortitude?

E. *Moral Application*.—Be never afraid to profess your faith openly; consider not the earthly consequences, but think of your eternal reward. Bear in mind the words of Our Saviour: "Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32).

LXVIII.—NABOTH. THE PUNISHMENT OF ACHAB AND JEZABEL.

A. *Preparation*.—The godless King Achab showed no gratitude whatever when God, by a fertile rain, put an end to the dreadful famine in his kingdom. He committed new crimes, and was finally, with his ungodly wife, punished with death by God. This is told in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Naboth's refusal. (b) Jezabel's crime. (c) Elias' prophecy. (d) Fulfillment of the same.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Near the palace of the king" at Jezrahel, north of Samaria, where Achab, who usually resided in Samaria, had another palace. "Give thee the inheritance of my fathers" which was prohibited by the law. "Could neither eat nor sleep" for anger. (b) "Stoned to death." The punishment of blasphemy was death. (c) "That he might now take the vineyard," for, according to the law, the king took possession of the estate of such a criminal. (d) "The new king," Jehu by name, who had all the relatives of the impious Achab put to death. "The dogs ate her flesh"; only the head, feet and hands remained.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Achab's and Jezabel's Sins*. The prophet reproached Achab thus: "Thou hast murdered and taken ill-gotten goods." Achab was cause of the death of the innocent Naboth because he, although able, and as king bound to do so, did not hinder the false accusation, unjust sentence and cruel death of Naboth. What does God forbid in the fifth commandment? How may we sin against the body and life of our neighbor? Achab was also guilty of being accessory to another's sin when he silently consented to the sin of his ungodly wife. In how many ways may we share the guilt of another's sin? Finally, Achab wrongfully usurped possession of Naboth's vineyard. The law designated that the estate of one put to death for blasphemy should fall into possession of the

king. But the accusation against Naboth was false, consequently his sentence and stoning were unjust, and the law could not rightly be applied to Naboth's property. Achab knew this; nevertheless, he took possession of the vineyard. Since this was done by violence it was an act of robbery. Against which commandment did Achab thereby sin? What does God forbid in the seventh commandment? Jezabel committed the same sins, since she was the occasion for them. She was, furthermore, accessory to another's sin, for she bade the authorities of the city to sin. 2. *The Sins of the City Authorities and False Witnesses.* The fourth commandment, it is true, obliges subordinates to obey their superiors, but only in so far as they do not command anything sinful. Since Jezabel, in order to convict Naboth, demanded false witnesses from the authorities of the city, therefore something sinful, they were not bound to obey. When would we not be allowed to obey our parents and superiors? When the elders obeyed the command of the king, they rendered themselves guilty of being accessory to another's sin by consent and co-operation. The false witnesses made untrue statements before the court of justice. Accordingly they sinned against the eighth commandment, by giving false testimony as well as by lying. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment? What do you understand by lying? 3. *The Justice and Faithfulness of God.* (a) Jezabel, by inducing the city authorities to commit this crime against Naboth, rendered herself guilty of a grievous sin. Achab shared the guilt because he allowed it to pass. Besides, he took wrongfully possession of Naboth's vineyard. For this both met with well deserved punishment. What, therefore, do we call God? What is meant by saying "God is just"? (b) His faithfulness. God had, through his prophet, declared that Achab and Jezabel would soon meet with death for their crimes. "Just at the place," etc. God fulfilled what he threatened. What, therefore, do we call God? What is meant by saying "God is faithful"?

E. *Moral Application.*—Have you perhaps, likewise, ill-gotten goods in your possession which you stole from your neighbor (pencils, pens, fruit, etc.)? Give them back or make restitution! They bring no blessing. Think of the punishment of Achab and Jezabel! Remember, there is no blessing in ill-gotten goods!

LXIX.—ELIAS IS CONSOLED AND APPOINTS ELISEUS. HIS ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

A. Preparation.—At the great miracle that Elias had worked upon Mount Carmel (see LXVII.), four hundred and fifty priests of Baal had been slain. Queen Jezabel, for this reason, deeply hated Elias, and she devised to have him killed. Elias had to flee from her persecution and became very sad. God consoled him, and commanded him to appoint Eliseus as his successor in the prophetic office, and then Elias was taken from this world in a wonderful manner. All this we learn in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) Flight and miraculous feeding of Elias. (b) He is consoled by God. (c) The appointing of Eliseus. (d) The ascent of Elias into heaven.

C. Explanation.—(a) Elias was persecuted because he caused the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal to be slain. "He was sad," because the inhabitants of the kingdom of Juda still carried on idol worship, and all his endeavors to convert the people had been in vain. He desired to die so that he might no longer be a witness of this abomination. "He walked in the strength of that food"; i. e., this food had so strengthened him that he could go forty days and forty nights without further partaking of nourishment. "The mount of God," Horeb, is so called because there God once appeared to Moses in a burning bush. This mountain appeared to the prophet as a special place of grace, to which he made a pilgrimage, there to beg of God endurance, strength and courage for his difficult calling. (b) "Amidst the whistling of a gentle wind," meaning that God had concealed Himself in the form of a gentle wind, as He once appeared in the pillar of cloud. "I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel whose knees have not bowed before Baal," meaning those who had not fallen away from the true God to practise idolatry. God wished thereby to console the prophet, who imagined that all Israel had fallen away. (c) He finds Eliseus, who is ploughing, invests him with his mantle, whereby he gives to understand that Eliseus is to be his successor. (d) "The spirit of God led him," i. e., God revealed to him that he would soon depart this earth, and urged him to go to the Jordan. There appeared a fiery chariot; i. e., Elias was taken away from the world upon a shining cloud having the form of a fiery chariot with horses. He goes toward heaven, but not into heaven; for he could not yet enter there, because heaven was closed through the sin of man, and was only to be reopened by the death of the Redeemer. Elias had to wait, like the other just of the Old Law, in the forecourt. According to general tradition Elias is one of the two witnesses who, according to the revelations of St. John, are to return at the end of the world. It is believed that he will then, by his exhortations, convert many, and will finally be put to death by

the Antichrist. "Disciples of Elias"—his followers who had remained on the other side of the Jordan. "The spirit of Elias," i. e., the spirit of God that had been with Elias, and that had caused him to work miracles, was transferred to Eliseus.

D. Commentary.—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His goodness. God loved His devout servant Elias, hence He bestowed many blessings upon him. He protected him from the machinations of the impious Jezabel, refreshed the prophet with food and drink, and consoled him in his great sadness. What do we call God, therefore? What do we mean by saying "God is good"? (b) His omnipotence. God proves this (1) by that miraculous food which sustained the prophet's strength for forty days and forty nights; (2) by dividing the waters of the Jordan when they were struck by the prophet's mantle; (3) by the miraculous ascent of Elias to heaven. What do you mean by saying "God is omnipotent"? 2. *The Virtues of Elias.* (a) His sadness. The fact that, notwithstanding his efforts, the blinded people continued in the worship of idols, filled the prophet with sadness, because God was thereby so greatly offended. Christ declares such sadness to be blessed. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (b) His longing for death. In order that he might no longer behold the crime of his people and their grievous offense against God, and that he might attain to God, the prophet wished to die. Is it permissible to wish for death? 3. *Elias a Prototype of Christ.* Both were sent by God; both prophets and miracle workers. Elias miraculously increased the store of meal and oil for the widow of Sarephta; Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand in the wilderness. Elias raised to life the only son of a widow; Christ made the young man of Naim to live again, the only son of a widow. Both fasted for forty days in the desert. Elias offered a sacrifice; Christ offered Himself to God as a sacrifice. Elias prayed upon the mountains Carmel and Horeb; Christ frequently prayed upon mountains (before the choosing of the apostles; upon the Mount of Olives). Both were sorrowful unto death, were miraculously fortified by an angel; both ascended into heaven, and will one day return from there.

E. Moral Application.—Be sad and sorrowful about your own sins and those of others, and avoid to be pleased at the sins of others. By so doing you would render yourself guilty before God of the same sins.

LXX.—THE PROPHET ELISEUS.

A. *Preparation*.—Eliseus was now the successor of Elias in his office of prophet, and, like him, performed many miracles. Some of these will be told in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The miracle at Jericho. (b) The punishment of the wicked boys. (c) The healing of Naaman. (d) Giezi's lie and punishment. (e) The glorification of Eliseus after his death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) After the ascent of Elias into heaven, God confirmed Eliseus as one of the prophets sent by him. The people perceived this from the numerous miracles worked by Eliseus. "The waters are very bad." They had a brackish taste. "Bring a new vessel, and put salt into it." Salt is the symbol of purification. "He went out," for the spring was situated outside the town, "and the waters were healed"; that is to say, made drinkable and (Kings iv. 2, 22) pleasant of taste, not however through the salt, but by God's grace. That spring is shown to this day; it is called the Sultan's spring, or Eliseus' well, and issues a very palatable water. (b) In "Bethel," in the south of the kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam (like Dan in the north) had caused a golden calf to be set up for worship (see LXV.). "And Eliseus threatened him in the name of the Lord," i. e., he announced unto him God's chastisements. (c) "Syria," northeast from the land of Chanaan. "Naaman was afflicted with leprosy." What is leprosy? (see XXX.). By an Israelite serving maid: who had been carried off by robbers, brought to Syria, and sold there as a slave. "Better than all the waters of Israel." The Jordan has muddy waters. "Father"; from this address by his servants it may be supposed that Naaman was a kind master to his subjects. Therefore his servants loved him and were anxious to see their master healed and well, and they persuaded him to obey the words of the prophet. "No other God but the God of Israel," i. e., the God of Israel is the only true God. By this sentence Naaman proclaimed his acceptance of the true faith. (d) "Disciples of the prophet." By these are understood the followers who by prayer, contemplation and a stern life, like our religious orders, strove after higher perfection and virtue. The prophets instructed them, for which reason they are called "disciples of the prophets." "A silver talent"—about \$200 in our money. "Was not my heart present when the man turned back?" God had revealed to the prophet everything that had taken place between Naaman and Giezi. (e) "After his death," which occurred fifty years after the departure of Elias (in the year 840 B. C.). Eliseus was about one hundred years old. "In the grave," i. e., in the vault where Eliseus' corpse was deposited, from which they hastily rolled away the stone that sealed it.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Attributes of God*. (a) His omnipotence.

God accredited the prophet Eliseus by many miracles. Enumerate them. Who alone can work miracles? Why can only God work miracles? What do you mean by saying that "God is omnipotent"? What are miracles? (b) His justice. It is revealed in the punishment (1) of the wicked boys at Bethel, and (2) in that of the avaricious and lying Giezi. What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *The Sin of the Boys of Bethel.* It was a twofold one. In the first place, the impious boys had ridiculed the venerable prophet by calling him a "bald head." Since Eliseus was a prophet, those boys had furthermore reviled, in him, God's messenger. Hence their punishment was so severe. Through the boys' death also their parents were punished, because they had brought them up badly. What are the duties of the young toward old age? In what way do we sin against spiritual and temporal authority? 3. *Giezi's Sins.* After Naaman was healed, Giezi followed him, to request presents from him, because he was avaricious and greedy. How do we sin by avarice? Among what sins is avarice classed? Why are these sins called capital sins? We will see what other sins proceeded from Giezi's avarice. Giezi pretended that his master had sent him because two of the disciples of the prophets had come. Was this true? Giezi therefore had intentionally spoken an untruth, a lie. What is a lie? On returning, when Eliseus asked him where he had been, he lied again. Naaman had given to Giezi two talents of silver and two garments, believing that Eliseus had asked for them through Giezi. As Giezi kept those gifts, they were unjustly acquired property, gotten by deceiving, or cheating, Naaman. How do we sin by deception? By Giezi's avarice the seventh and eighth commandments were broken simultaneously. 4. *The Veneration of Relics.* God raised to life the dead man who was thrown into the grave of Eliseus at the very moment when he became in contact with the remains of this servant of God. Since God has frequently worked miracles through the remains, or relics, of the saints, we rightly hold the same in great veneration. Why do we venerate the relics, or remains, of the saints?

E. *Moral Application.*—Keep always in mind the punishment of the wicked boys of Bethel, and avoid ridiculing old age. Nor make fun of a drunken man, of a beggar, of cripples and other persons afflicted with infirmity. Should your conscience reproach you in this respect, then make to-day a firm resolution never again to treat your fellow men unkindly and harshly.

LXXI.—THE PROPHET JONAS.

A. Preparation.—Several years after the death of Eliseus God bade a prophet named Jonas to go to the heathen and ungodly inhabitants of Ninive, capital of the Assyrian kingdom, to preach penance to them. How Jonas at first resisted God's commands, and how he was punished for it; how he finally went to Ninive and preached there, and what the inhabitants did will be learned in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) Punishment of the disobedient Jonas. (b) His preaching of penance at Ninive. (c) Enlightening the prophet about the sparing of the city.

C. Explanation.—(a) Eliseus died in the year 840. Jonas was called twenty years later. "Ninive," on the Tigris, with a circumference of nearly two hundred miles. The kingdom of Assyria was situated to the east of Syria. "The wickedness thereof is come up before me." Before God punished the wicked Ninivites he desired to warn them. Therefore he sent Jonas to them. Jonas ran away. For what reason? Because he feared that he would only be reviled and mocked by the heathens of Ninive, and also because he would gladly have seen the destruction of that city which was so dangerous for his people and country. (As a matter of fact, a century later the kingdom of Israel was conquered and destroyed by these Assyrians.) For this reason Jonas wished to shirk the divine commission by flight. A ship sailing from Joppa for Tharsis, in Spain. It was in danger of being wrecked. The ship's crew were Phœnicians. They asked one another who was responsible for the calamity? They thought the fearful storm was a punishment for a great crime committed by one of those on board. The storm broke—the waves towered about them. A large fish appeared. It was a whale, the largest fish in existence; it attains a length of thirty feet, and its jaws are wide enough to swallow a man whole. The preservation of Jonas in the whale's belly was a miracle of the divine omnipotence. (b) He walked through the city, i. e., he walked through all the streets, saying: The city will be destroyed unless you do penance. (c) Jonas was displeased, because he would rather have seen Ninive's downfall. The Lord said: there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons that know not how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, i. e., that are still inexperienced, or under age, and therefore do not yet know good from bad. God wished to tell the prophet: If you are so dejected at the loss of a plant that did not even belong to you, how much more compassion should I have for upward of 120,000 innocent children, and for their sake alone spare the city?

D. Commentary.—I. *Attributes of God.* (a) His omnipresence. Jonas wished to flee from God. For this reason he embarked on a

ship to a foreign country. Can we flee from God? Why is this an impossibility? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? (b) His omnipotence and justice. God sends a fearful storm, causes the lot cast to fall upon Jonas, calms the storm, lets a huge fish appear to swallow Jonas, and keeps him alive for three days in the belly of the fish. These were proofs of His omnipotence. What is meant by saying "God is omnipotent"? That Jonas was thrown into the sea and swallowed by a fish was well deserved punishment for his disobedience. What do we therefore say of God? What do we mean by saying "God is just"? (c) His patience. Although Ninive's sins were so heinous that they cried to heaven for vengeance, God did not punish the Ninivites immediately. He granted them forty days' time to be converted. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is patient"? (d) His mercy. When the Ninivites did penance and were converted, God forgave them their great guilt, and did not punish them with destruction of their city. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? (e) His unchangeableness and faithfulness. What do you mean by saying "God is unchangeable, faithful"? God's treatment of the Ninivites would seem contrary to His unchangeableness and His faithfulness, because He altered His determination to let Ninive perish, and did not fulfill what He had threatened through the prophet. However, when calling to Jonas, "yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed," it is necessary to add, "if it be not converted." As the Ninivites, as a matter of fact, were converted, this threat had had its effect, and the merciful God could now remit to the repentant Ninivites the punishment which His justice had threatened.

2. *The Good Works of the Sinner.* The Ninivites, living in the state of grievous sin, fasted and prayed; they performed good works. As a result they became converted and their city was spared. From this we learn that the sinner's good works, although not meritorious for heaven, are by no means unprofitable; for they obtain, as this story proves to us, the grace of conversion, and sometimes avert temporal punishment. Is, therefore, the good which is done in the state of sin useless?

3. *Jonas a Figure, or Type, of Christ.* Jonas was sent to the Jews and pagans; Christ, too, came into the world for the Jews and pagans, i. e., for all mankind. He brought a gospel for all, and died for all. Jonas offered his life voluntarily, to save his companions; Christ went voluntarily to death, to save all who

would believe in Him from eternal perdition. Jonas was swallowed by the fish, and on the third day thrown up upon the shore; Christ was laid in the tomb, whence He rose again on the third day. Christ Himself refers to this latter resemblance to Jonas. When the Jews demanded a sign from Him that He was speaking the truth, He said: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so also shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth."

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn from this story that you can not flee from God. His omnipotence and justice will reach you, even at the furthest ends of the earth. Think of this, especially when tempted to sin.

LXXII.—THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL (722 B. C.).

A. *Preparation*.—Although God sent many prophets to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel to preach to them penance and amendment of their lives, and to threaten them with divine chastisement for their sins, they would not be converted, for which reason the threatened punishment at last descended upon them. We shall hear about this in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Impenitence of the inhabitants and their punishment. (b) Fate of the kingdom of Israel and its inhabitants.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) They were exhorted by the prophets to do penance, notably by Amos and Osee. They led a luxurious life; indulged in the vice of intemperance; committed murders, robbery and adultery. (b) The tribes of Juda and Benjamin had remained true to the old religion.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *God's Patience, Justice and Faithfulness*. "The Lord ceased not to call upon the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel to do penance." Since the impious first king of this kingdom, God had exhorted the inhabitants for more than two hundred and fifty years, through His prophets, to do penance and to amend their lives. He had therefore waited long, and had granted them considerable time in which to be converted. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is patient"? But since the wicked inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel would not amend their lives, the well merited chastisement finally descended

upon them; it consisted in the overthrow of their kingdom, the inhabitants being carried off into captivity. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? That which God had threatened through the prophet Amos, at least a hundred years before the fall of the kingdom of Israel, "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom," had actually taken place by the overthrow of this kingdom. God carried out what He had threatened. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? 2. *Resistance to Divine Grace.* God had offered His graces abundantly to the people of Israel by urgently inviting them to do penance. But they resisted divine grace, and were therefore scattered. And likewise will the one be punished who resists the grace of God and His many admonitions and warnings. What ought we to do, that we may attain the grace for our salvation?

E. *Moral Application.*—Take well to heart the sad fate of the people of Israel, and be careful not to resist divine grace, such as they did. Mind the good lessons given you in religious instruction; listen to the exhortations which your parents, teachers or spiritual directors give you; obey the voice of conscience, which warns you to avoid evil! Then you will escape the sad fate of captivity in hell, and the grace of God will work your salvation.

REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

1. Short rehearsal of its history. 2. Which prophets appeared in it? 3. Prototypes of the Messias. 4. Geographical questions. Where were situated and upon what occasions were named: (a) Sichem (Samaria)? (LXV.) (b) Bethel? (LXV. and LXX.) (c) Dan? (LXV.) (d) The brook Carith? (LXVI.) (e) Sarephta? (LXVI.) (f) Carmel? (LXVII.) (g) Jezrahel? (LXVIII.) (h) Mount Horeb? (LXIX.) (i) Jericho? (LXX.) (j) Syria (Damascus)? (LXX.) (k) Ninive? (LXXI.) (l) Samaria? (LXXII.) (m) Mount Garizim? (LXXII.)

LXXIII.—TOBIAS.

A. *Preparation.*—The former inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel were now held captive in Assyria. Among them there lived a very virtuous man, of whom the following story relates.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Tobias' piety and charity, (b) his fear of God, (c) his patience in suffering, and (d) his conscientiousness.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Tobias." He was at the capital city of the country, Nineveh. He avoided association with the ungodly. He went up to Jerusalem, not to Bethel or to Dan, like so many of his fellow citizens. He exhorted his fellow captives to penance and to patience. (b) Sennacherib persecuted the Israelites. He had suffered a defeat before Jerusalem (see LXXVI.), and for that reason revenged himself upon the Israelites in captivity. (c) Tobias, exhausted after his night's work of burying the dead, lay down by the wall of his house. As he was sleeping, hot dung from a swallow's nest fell upon his eyes, which finally produced blindness. (d) His fears that the young kid might have been stolen. He was in doubt whether the gift had been lawfully acquired. His wife, made angry by this suspicion, replied sharply, and reproached him, because he had given away his entire fortune to the poor and needy, so that he was now poor himself.

D. *Commentary*.—*The Virtues of Tobias*. (a) His piety. Tobias, from his earliest youth, had shunned the society of the wicked, observing God's commandments faithfully and conscientiously. On great festivals he would not, like his ungodly fellow citizens, go to Bethel or Dan to worship the golden calf, but made a pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem to worship the true God. Tobias therefore possessed the virtue of piety. (b) His charity. In captivity he visited and consoled, from motives of pure charity, his unfortunate fellow captives, exhorting them to penance and amendment of life, as well as to patience in suffering. He did good to the poor without distinction, not expecting reward; he gave them money, food and clothing; he buried the dead. His charity therefore was sincere, unselfish and indiscriminating. When is our charity sincere? When is our charity unselfish? When is our charity indiscriminating? Tobias, in his charity, consoled the sorrowful, admonished sinners to follow the right path, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, buried the dead. What particular works did he thereby practise? Name the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.¹ (c) His fear of God. The king had forbidden, under pain of death, the burying of the dead; but Tobias disobeyed him because he feared the law of God more than the law of the king. He possessed, therefore, the fear of God in a high degree. In what cases is it permissible not to obey parents and superiors? (d) His conscientiousness. When his wife one day received, as a present, a young kid, Tobias objected to the value of the gift; he suspected that the donor might not have acquired it lawfully. For this reason he wanted it returned to him. Tobias

is thus seen to have been very conscientious; he would not retain goods or property unlawfully acquired. What ought we to do if we have the property of others unlawfully in our possession, or if we have injured our neighbor?

E. Moral Application.—Devote yourselves to the practice of piety from early youth. Observe the commandments of God faithfully. Avoid the society of wicked associates.

LXXIV.—ADVICE OF TOBIAS TO HIS SON.

A. Preparation.—Tobias had become old and infirm, and believed that death was near. Hence he gave his son, as a last legacy, a number of excellent admonitions. The following story will tell us of them.

B. Narration.—Advice (a) for the faithful observance of the fourth commandment, (b) to fear God, (c) warning against impurity and pride, exhortation (d) to justice, (e) to charity, (f) to piety and to confidence in God.

C. Explanation.—(a) The many and great perils your mother hath suffered, in her health, in anxieties, in work. (b) "Have God in thy mind," i. e., remain pious and good, then God will be with thee; never consent to sin, thereby committing one. (c) "For from it all perdition took its beginning," i. e., through pride it was that sin, and with it corruption, entered the world. Remember the fall of the angels, and that of our first parents. (d) "Bless God at all times," in good or ill fortune. He will guide thy path, lead thee. Be not solicitous concerning your future; there is much good, as, peace of soul, a good conscience here on earth and, in the next life, eternal happiness.

D. Commentary.—I. *Tobias an Exemplary Father.* All his life long Tobias was solicitous about his son's salvation. By word and example he had brought up his son to piety, fear of the Lord and all virtues. Thinking that his end was approaching, he impressed these important duties once more upon the son. He counseled him: (a) To observe faithfully the fourth commandment: Honor thy mother. What does God require of us in the fourth commandment? (b) To the fear of the Lord. "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind." How long does the Holy Spirit remain in the soul? (c) To justice. "If any man works for thee." Cheating the laborer out of his wages is a sin crying to heaven for vengeance. Which are the sins crying to heaven? (d) To charity. "Give alms." Which are the corporal works of mercy? (e) To piety and con-

fidence in God. "Bless God"! He warns him of sin, and in particular of impurity—to be shunned especially; of pride: "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind." Why ought we particularly to shun impurity? When do we sin by pride? 2. *The Young Tobias an Exemplary Son.* The son answered and spake: "Father, I will do all these things." Tobias received his father's good counsels gladly and willingly, and promised obediently to live up to them. He obeyed thus faithfully and conscientiously the fourth commandment. When do children sin against the obedience they owe?

E. *Moral Application.*—Be good and obedient children to your parents. Listen gladly to their advice, obey promptly and willingly. If you have neglected this in the past, then make the resolution this day to obey cheerfully in the future, to listen attentively to your parents' advice and to follow it.

LXXV.—TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL RAPHAEL.

A. *Preparation.*—After giving these good counsels, Tobias sent his son to a distant place, to collect a debt of long standing. The angel Raphael accompanied him upon this long journey. We shall now learn what came to pass upon the journey and after the return.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Departure of Young Tobias and the angel. (b) The enormous fish. (c) Tobias' marriage to Sara and return. (d) Joyful meeting and healing of the father. (e) Raphael's departure.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Rages in Media." Media was the adjoining kingdom, to the east of Assyria; from Ninive to Rages was a distance of about 500 miles. Tobias had lent a sum of money to a relative named Gabelus. The angel Raphael in the disguise of a young man. (b) Tobias put his feet into the water. Washing the feet was on account of the footwear then in use (sandals with wooden soles, attached to the feet by leather thongs), a daily custom, especially on journeys. (c) His parents began to be sad, owing to his long absence. Returns with his companion, i. e., with the angel. (d) Raphael tells them to thank God, not him. "God has shown his mercy unto you. I am one of the seven who stand before the Lord." They were seized with fear, and fell prostrate on the ground. Tobias died in peace—peace of soul, because he had loved virtue, and had hated and shunned the evil.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Fourth Commandment.* Young Tobias, as we have seen in this story, was an exemplary son. He honored

his parents, was obedient to them and loved them. The tender devotion for his parents that animated him is shown in his words: "Let me depart, for I know that my father and mother are troubled on my account." He did not wish to cause them sorrow and trouble, therefore he started for home. How do children sin against the love they owe their parents? Because the young Tobias did his duty to his parents faithfully and conscientiously, God fulfilled the promise which is joined to the fourth commandment, "that thy days may be long in the land." God protected him by sending the angel Raphael. He blessed him by bestowing a virtuous wife and temporal wealth upon him. He allowed him to reach a great age, for it is said he saw his children's children. He received, undoubtedly, in the next world eternal happiness as his reward. What may those children expect who faithfully observe the fourth commandment? 2. *The Doctrine of the Guardian Angel.* By this Biblical story the Church's doctrine of guardian angels is confirmed. Tobias took leave of his son with the words, "Thy holy angel protect thee!" from which may be inferred that he believed in guardian angels. In order to know what guardian angels do for us, let us consider the angel Raphael in our story. He loved young Tobias, hence he asked to accompany him on his journey; he protected him in danger, when the huge fish threatened to swallow Tobias; he gave him good advice, exhorted him to persevere and to pray; he offered the prayers and the good works of the elder Tobias to God. How are the guardian angels disposed toward us? Tobias greatly esteemed his companion, the holy angel. He called for him when he was in danger, obeyed his counsels faithfully, and showed his gratitude by offering him the half of his fortune. What do we owe our holy angel guardian? 3. *Good Works.* The angel Raphael announced that the reason for his having been sent was to be found in the good works which Tobias had performed. These may be summed up in three words: Prayer, fasting and almsgiving. By "prayer" is meant not merely actual praying, but in general all works of devotion; for instance, Tobias' pilgrimage to Jerusalem. By "fasting" is understood every work of mortification; for instance, when Tobias took no rest at night so that he might bury the dead. Under "almsgiving" are numbered the works of charity and mercy which Tobias practised so diligently. What good works are particularly recommended in Holy Scripture? These good works are specially recommended to us because they are the opposite of the

threefold evil of lust or concupiscence, by which we are so frequently enticed to sin—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and pride; because the lust of the eyes, or avarice, may be overcome by almsgiving, the lust of the flesh, or sensuality, by fasting, and pride by devout prayer, which presupposes the humbling of ourselves before God. 4. *Concerning the Sufferings of the Just* (cf. XXX. The patient “Job,” with whom Tobias had many things in common).

E. *Moral Application*.—Venerate your holy guardian angel, listen to his voice when he warns you of danger, never cause him any sorrow. (Let the lesson be closed with a prayer to the guardian angel.)

REVIEW OF THE ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY—THE HISTORY OF TOBIAS.

1. A short recapitulation of the events of this period. 2. How were the Israelites treated under Salmanasar? under Sennacherib? Where situated and upon what occasion were mentioned: (a) Ninive? (b) Rages? (c) Tigris?

LXXVI.—THE KINGS OF JUDA.

A. *Preparation*.—Since the division of the kingdom of Solomon (975 B. C.), we have only concerned ourselves with the kingdom of Israel and learned its history, its fall and the captivity of its people. In the following stories we shall hear something about the fate of the kingdom of Juda, which was composed of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin who had remained faithful to Roboam, and which had for its capital Jerusalem. The following story will treat of the kings of this realm.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Ozias' crime and punishment. (b) King Ezechias. (c) Other kings.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Ozias reigned in happiness because peace and prosperity prevailed in his kingdom, and in consequence of his numerous victories his name had become famous among the nations. But he wished to usurp the duties of the priesthood, and to enter the Temple, which was permitted to the priests only. (b) Ezechias was a God-fearing sovereign; he caused the altars of the idols to be torn down, and forbade idolatry in his realm. (c) The succeeding kings were without shame; that is, without fear of the divine punishment. They worshipped idols, especially the idol Moloch. Heathenish abominations, such as superstition, atheism, magic and debauchery.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *God Humbles the Proud*. King Ozias be-

came vain in consequence of his success and good fortune. St. Chrysostom says of him: "Inebriated by his success and puffed up by his good fortune, Ozias desired more than his office accorded to him, and because he was king he imagined that he might exercise also priestly functions." By his usurpation of priestly prerogatives he elevated himself inordinately, did not pay to God the honor due Him, denying obedience to God by transgressing His laws, and reviled his neighbor by threatening the priests who opposed him. How do we sin by pride? How humiliating was the punishment which then befell Ozias! The proud king was stricken with a most loathsome disease which, on account of its infectious nature, rendered him incapable of reigning any longer. He lost, therefore, his royal dignity, and was forced to end his days in an isolated dwelling, far from the abode of man. How true is the word of the Lord: "Who so exalteth himself shall be humbled." 2. *The Divine Institution of the Priesthood.* The awful chastisement of the proud Ozias for usurping the prerogatives of the priests was at the same time a confirmation that the priesthood was a divine institution. So also is the priesthood of the new law instituted by God. Upon whom did Christ directly bestow the priesthood? Who are the successors of the apostles? 3. *God's Justice and Benevolence.* God rewarded Ezechias for his faithful observance of the law by miraculous assistance; but he punished the arrogant Ozias with leprosy, and inflicted other chastisements upon the wicked kings. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? God blessed the virtuous Ezechias: that means He bestowed many benefits upon him. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is benevolent"?

E. *Moral Application.*—Take warning, by the awful punishment of Ozias, never to give way to pride. Remember that we have no right to be proud, for what we are and what we have we owe to God's benevolence.

LXXVII.—THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

A. *Preparation.*—In order to convert the ungodly kings and the wicked people God sent them many prophets, of whom the most renowned was Isaiah. The following story will tell us about him.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Isaiah preaches penance. (b) His prophecies of the Messias.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Isaiah (760-700 B. C.). The prophets of the Old Law.

"Purify yourselves, namely, cleanse your heart from sins." They were provoking God's wrath by their impenitence. (b) He spoke of Christ's life like the evangelists; that is to say, as if he had witnessed it all, like the evangelists—as if he had been a contemporary of the Redeemer. "The tongues of the dumb are loosed," so that they speak like other men. "There is no beauty nor comeliness in him." As a result of the cruel treatment He is entirely disfigured, not recognizable. "Man of sorrows," because He had to suffer so much. He endured all this to give us salvation, to procure for us the peace of the soul. We are healed of the wounds which sin had inflicted upon our souls. He opened His mouth, but it is not to complain of the injustice which He suffers innocently. He is dumb as a lamb; that is, he suffers with patience and with resignation to the will of God.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *God's Sanctity, Omniscience and Mercy.* God, through the prophets, calls upon the people to cleanse and to wash themselves from all sin. Sin or evil displeases God. He detests and abhors it. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is holy"? God tells the people, through the prophet, "to remove their evil thoughts from His sight." God knew, therefore, that the people thought evil. What do we call God because He knows even the most secret thoughts? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? If the people had been converted to Him, if they had ceased to lead bad lives, then God would have forgiven them. "If your sins are as red as scarlet." What do we call God because He is ready and willing to pardon the truly penitent sinner? What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? 2. *God is Ready to Forgive all Sins.* We may conclude from the words "if your sins," etc., that forgiveness for all sins, even the most grievous, can be had from God. Can all sins be remitted? Hence it is a great sin for one to think, "God can not forgive my sins": this would be a sin against the Holy Ghost (to despair of God's grace). Which are the six sins against the Holy Ghost? 3. *The Ninth Messianic Prophecy.* Isaiah prophesied of the Redeemer: (a) That He should be born of a virgin. "Behold a virgin." This virgin was Mary. In which article of faith do we express this as our belief? What does the third article of faith say? (b) That He would be God. "His name shall be called Emmanuel" (God with us). "God himself comes to redeem you." What do the prophets call the Redeemer in their prophecies? (c) That He would work many miracles. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened." By these miracles the Redeemer will give proof of a divine attribute, omnipotence, and thus prove His divinity. (d) That He would suffer and die. He will endure much sorrow—"be

wounded," "beaten," "led to the slaughter" and "sacrificed." He will suffer all things, even death like a lamb. In whom was all this literally fulfilled? What does the fourth article of the creed teach us? The prophet declares also that the Redeemer would suffer voluntarily. "He was offered because it was his own will." Was Christ compelled to suffer death? Then Isaiah goes on to prophesy that the Redeemer will suffer and die for our iniquities, to bestow upon us peace (of soul) with God, and to heal us of all our sins. Why did Christ wish to suffer and die? (e) "That the nations (all peoples) shall pray to Him, and that His grave shall be glorious." All the nations of the earth shall acknowledge the Messiah as God, and worship Him, which as a matter of fact has been fulfilled, for Christianity has spread over the whole earth and is still spreading. His grave became glorious through His resurrection.

E. *Moral Application*.—God hates and detests bad thoughts and sinful actions. Suppress, in particular, every thought of impurity, of envy, pride, of malicious joy at the misfortunes of others, and avoid all bad actions. (This lesson should be closed with an act of contrition and good resolution.)

LXXVIII.—JUDITH.

A. *Preparation*.—About one hundred years after the prophet Isaiah, the kingdom of Juda was in imminent danger of destruction. It was, however, once more delivered from this peril through the act of a brave woman named Judith, of whom we shall learn more in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Holofernes before Bethulia. (b) Judith's prayer and resolve. (c) Her heroic deed. (d) Joy and sally of the inhabitants of Bethulia. (e) Judith's renown and end.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Bethulia, a fortress to the north of Jerusalem, in the Gelboe mountains. Holofernes orders the supply of water cut off, to compel the surrender of Bethulia. Judith, a widow, fasted much; that is to say, she fasted daily with the exception of holydays. She wore a penitential garment; that means a coarse garment of haircloth. (b) She implores the Lord to enlighten and assist her. (c) She delivers the head of Holofernes to her maid, bidding her put it in a wallet. (d) The prince of the people—the chief or supreme official in Bethulia.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Judith's Virtues*. (a) Her piety. It is said of her that "she prayed much" and devoutly; without doubt for this reason she was reputed to be a saintly woman. What does prayer mean? (b) Her mortification. Judith led a retired life, fasted a great deal, and wore haircloth. (c) Her chastity. Judith is called a

chaste widow. What is forbidden by the sixth commandment?¹

(d) Her fortitude. In her fortitude she was not deterred from facing the dangers that confronted her, and of delivering her country from the dreaded enemy. In what does fortitude consist?

(e) Her patriotism. Judith faced awful dangers. The hostile Holofernes could have slain her or deprived her of liberty. Nevertheless, through her intense love of her people and country, she was ready even for such sacrifice. (f) Her humility. She was possessed of this virtue in a high degree. She herself exhorted to humility. "Let us wait humbly for his consolation." She gave to God the glory for the vanquishing of Holofernes: "Praise ye the Lord our God, who hath not forsaken them that hope in him."

2. *Judith the Type of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* Judith was a chaste woman; Mary is the most chaste virgin and the most pure mother. Both were imbued and animated with glowing love for their people, for mankind, and they prayed much in the retirement of their chamber. Judith humbly refused all honor for herself and gave it to God; Mary, in her profound humility, called herself the servant of the Lord. Judith cut off the head of Holofernes, the enemy of the Jews; Mary crushed the head of the infernal serpent, the enemy of mankind. Ozias praised Judith: "Blessed art thou, O daughter of the Lord, above all women upon the earth"; the angel said unto Mary: "Blessed are thou among women." The Jewish people called Judith the "glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honor of our people"; Mary as queen of all the saints is the glory of heaven, the joy of the angels and blessed, the honor of Christendom.

E. *Moral Application.*—Begin your work with prayer, as Judith did. Did you begin this day with prayer? Do you say grace before meals? Never forget to begin and end your day's work with God (prayer).

REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDA BEFORE THE CAPTIVITY OF BABYLON.

(1) A short recapitulation of the events of this period. 2. The prophecies concerning the Messias. 3. Which prototype of Mary have we been made acquainted with? 4. What prophets have been active in the kingdom of Juda? (see LXXVI.). 5. Questions on geography. Upon what occasion were mentioned and where are situated: (a) Bethulia? (LXXVIII.). (b) Mount Gelboe? (LXXVIII.)

THE CAPTIVITY OF BABYLON (606-536 B. C.).

LXXIX.—CAPTIVITY AT BABYLON AND THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. JEREMIAS.

A. *Preparation*.—Since the inhabitants of the kingdom of Juda, notwithstanding the exhortations of the prophets, had not amended their ways, God permitted their kingdom to fall, the capital to be destroyed, and the inhabitants to be dragged into captivity. This was the time of the prophet Jeremias, of whom we shall be told in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Fruitless warnings of Jeremias. (b) Fall of the kingdom of Juda. The Israelites led captive to Babylon. (c) Lamentation of Jeremias. (d) His prophecy.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "With a yoke" (Jer. xxvii.). By yoke is generally understood a harness of wood placed upon the necks of oxen, and to which are fastened the traces. The prophet appeared among the people with a yoke upon his neck, as a sign to them of the oppression of the captivity with which God would visit them as a punishment for their impenitence. But they persecuted him because his penitential sermons and reproaches on account of their sins displeased them. Jeremias was finally scourged and thrown into a dungeon. He was set free by Nabuchodonosor, after the conquest of Jerusalem. (b) "King of Babylon," or Babylonia, with capital Babylon on the Euphrates. Nabuchodonosor came again and besieged Jerusalem, because the Jews had revolted against him. This was in the year 599. A fearful famine set in, which was so terrible that the most revolting things were eaten, even children being killed and devoured by their own mothers. Finally, after a siege which had lasted a year and a half, Jerusalem was destroyed, in the year 588. The city was plundered and sacked. The ark of the covenant, the holy tent, and the altar of burnt offerings had been previously removed by Jeremias and hidden in a cave on Mount Nebo. Almost all of the people were carried away captive, except some of the very poorest, who were left behind to cultivate the land" (lii. 16). (c) Jeremias was allowed by the victor the choice either to remain or to go to Babylon. "The mistress of the people," the once powerful Jerusalem, that ruled over many nations, has become like a widow; that means forsaken, deprived. It was now taxed with a tribute to the king of Babylon. "The ways of Sion"; that means the roads, paths that led to Sion (Jerusalem)—"O all you who pass by the way"—by Jerusalem. "Convert us" (Lam. v. 21). God must make a beginning with His grace. "Renew our days": the prophet asks for them a return of former happy times. (d) "He knew," in consequence of divine revelation, what

would happen to the house, that is, to the descendants of these two kingdoms. "I will write my law in their hearts and be merciful to their injustices." The New Law, that God here promises through His prophets, will be a covenant of the heart, a law of grace.

D. Commentary.—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His patience. God had unceasingly, through His prophets, especially through Jeremias, invited the obstinate inhabitants of the kingdom of Juda to do penance. He bore with them patiently for 387 years, until at last the threatened punishment was visited upon them. God had therefore waited a long time before He punished. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is forbearing"? (b) His faithfulness. That with which God had threatened the impenitent people of the kingdom Judea through His prophet Jeremias had actually come to pass. "You shall serve the king of Babylon." God had accordingly carried out His threat. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? (c) His justice. The realization of the divine threat was a well merited punishment for the impenitent people, who were now deprived of freedom and home. The prophet, who was innocently kept a prisoner, however, was by God's providence rewarded with liberty. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *The Necessity of God's Grace.* In Jeremias' words, "Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted," the necessity of divine grace is clearly pointed out to us. God must make a beginning with His grace. "No one can come to me, unless the Father draws him"; that means by His grace. To what extent is the assistance of grace necessary to us? 3. *The Tenth Messianic Prophecy.* The prophet evidently referred, in his prophetic words, "Behold, the day cometh when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel," to the New Law, which was to be more perfect than the Old Law. While in the Old Law the commandments were written upon tablets of stone, in the New Law God wills that His commandments should be written in the hearts of men, that they may be purified by His grace from their iniquities and be saved.

E. Moral Application.—You are members of the New Law foretold by the prophets. In holy Baptism the law, that means the commandments of God, were implanted in your heart. God cleansed you from original sin and sanctified you. And when you went to Confession God purified you from your sins afresh, and bestowed

His grace again upon you. Be careful not to lose it again by grievous sin, and remember the words of the apostle: "Brethren, we exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain."

LXXX.—THE JEWS IN BABYLON. EZECHIEL'S VISION.

A. *Preparation*.—The unfortunate inhabitants of the kingdom of Juda found themselves now in captivity in the great Babylonian kingdom. What happened to them there, and how God consoled them through a prophet, we shall learn in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Longing of the captives for their home. (b) Work of the prophet Ezechiel. (c) His vision. (d) Meaning of the same.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) God permitted the Jews to be taken captive by the Babylonians. For seventy years the Jews remained captive in Babylon. They wept and sighed, longing to return to their country. "On the branches of the willow trees we hung up our harps"; they meant by that, that in their sadness they could not sing to the harp. "Hymn of praise"—a joyful song. "How could we sing the songs of Sion in a strange land?" According to their ideas, this would have been a desecration of the songs that they had chanted in Jerusalem at the divine worship. "May my right hand be forgotten" (by God, who giveth all life and movement), so that it would become lame and useless. "My tongue clave to my jaws," for thirst, "so that it is dumb, if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joys"; that means, if anything but Jerusalem should cause me gladness! (b) Vision—apparition. (c) Vision of of the dry bones—the bones of the dead (Ezech. xxxvii. 1). Thus saith the Lord God: "Come, spirit, from the four winds"—the four points of the compass. (d) "Our bones are dried up," so they said, for they felt, in their captivity, as if they were dead, in a grave.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Purpose of Suffering*. How great the sorrow of the captives was may be inferred from the touching lamentations, put into verse by their contemporary. Still this sorrow, this common suffering, was most salutary for the Jews. They realized now how foolishly they had acted by forsaking God, and giving no heed to exhortations and warnings of the prophets. For this reason they returned to God with contrition and were converted. Thus these sufferings brought about an amendment of life of the Jews. If God provides for everything, why is there so much suffering? 2. *The Divine Mercy and Goodness*. Although the captivity of the Jews was a severe punishment for them, yet it was at

the same time a proof of divine mercy. "God desires not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live." For this reason God called the prophet Ezechiel, who exhorted the captives to be converted. What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? Through the prophets God caused it to be revealed to the captives that He would lead them back to their country, and thus gave them a fresh proof of His infinite love and goodness. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 3. *The Eleventh Messianic Prophecy.* Ezechiel's vision of the resurrection, by the spirit, of the dry bones lying scattered in the valley, according to the explanation which God Himself gave, points, first of all, to the Jews dwelling scattered throughout the kingdom of Babylon whom the Lord would bring together, instil with new courage and lead back to their country. This marvelous vision may be applied also to the New Law, in which the Redeemer, who gathers around Him the nations, scattered over the whole world in darkness and the shadow of the death of unbelief, reanimates them by the Holy Spirit, and transforms them into a great people and in the kingdom of His Church.

E. *Moral Application.*—You, too, belong, through holy Baptism, in which the Holy Spirit was granted to you, to this great people and kingdom of God, to the holy Catholic Church. Look to it that not by grievous sin, which drives the Holy Spirit out of your soul, you are relapsed into spiritual death.

LXXXI.—YOUNG DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS.

A. *Preparation.*—Even in captivity there were not lacking among the Jews temptations to disobedience against the divine law, particularly by partaking of forbidden food. Many sinned, others remained faithful to the commandments. To this number belonged the youthful Daniel and his friends. We shall now learn how God rewarded them for this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Daniel's and his friends' fear of God. (b) Their reward.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Daniel and his friends Ananias, Misael and Azarias were selected for service in the palace, which means that they were to be trained to be court officials. For this reason they received instruction in the writing and speaking of the Babylonian language, as also in all the sciences. They resolved not to eat the food forbidden by their law. According to their

law the Jews were forbidden to eat: The flesh of unclean animals, such as pork, for instance; the meat of animals that had been strangled to death, and in which still remained the blood, raw meat, certain parts of the meat of animals, finally, the meat of animals that had been sacrificed to idols. Hence Daniel and his friends wished to eat only vegetables. (b) God gave them wisdom and science as a reward for their piety, so that they surpassed all Jews and Babylonians in knowledge. They received the "gift of prophecy," i. e., the gift to foretell the future.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Fear of God.* Daniel and his friends resolved to observe the law of God, and not to eat forbidden foods, because they feared to offend God. They possessed, therefore, the virtue of the fear of God, and practised the same, although grievous temptations to be disloyal to God were not wanting. Their fear of sin was greater than the inducements of temptation. Must we avoid grievous sins only? 2. *Temperance.* As we have seen, the inducements to sin were very great for Daniel and his friends. The tempting foods and precious wines must have excited their desires. But they bridled their sensual inclinations and desires, and were not prevented thereby from right-doing. They possessed, therefore, also the virtue of temperance, which is one of the four cardinal virtues. In what does temperance consist? 3. *The Law of Abstinence.* According to the Jewish law it was forbidden to partake of flesh foods and wines with idolaters. Since the Babylonians were idolaters, Daniel and his friends contented themselves with vegetables and water, thereby observing the abstinence, which prescribes in our days that upon certain days, especially Fridays, no meat must be eaten. What does the third commandment of the Church prescribe? Who is obliged to abstain from meat?

E. *Moral Application.*—Observe conscientiously the prescribed abstinence from flesh meat on Fridays and other days of obligation. If it is hard for you to do so sometimes, reflect that Friday is the day upon which the Saviour endured so much suffering for you. For His sake you certainly can undertake the trifling deprivation of flesh meat for a day.

LXXXII.—DANIEL SAVES THE CHASTE SUSANNA.

A. *Preparation.*—The great wisdom which Daniel had received as reward for his piety revealed itself, on one occasion, in the trial and conviction of two villains who had falsely accused a virtuous wife. The following story will tell us about it.

B. Narration.—(a) The temptation. (b) Susanna's accusation and condemnation. (c) The unmasking and punishing of the wicked judges.

C. Explanation.—(a) Daniel is chosen to be judge. By permission of the king (Nabuchodonosor) the Jews were allowed to be judged according to the laws of their own country. "Susanna went to walk in the orchard"; one was adjoining nearly every house. She was tempted to evil, to a sin against the sixth commandment. She was taken by surprise. Because of the false testimony of these two wicked men Susanna forfeited her good name and reputation and was condemned to death. "For if I do this thing, it is death to me" (Dan. xiii. 22), spiritual death, death of the soul. "And if I do it not I shall not escape your hands," because you will accuse me falsely and my condemnation will follow. It is better for me to fall into your hands and die innocent. (b) Every one who knew her wept, because they knew her virtues, and they believed it impossible that she would burden herself with such crime. She called upon the Lord to save her. The multitude of the people was to pronounce the verdict, because the judge whose duty it otherwise would have been to pronounce the verdict appeared as a witness. She was condemned to be stoned to death. (c) God enlightened Daniel so that he perceived the unjust condemnation of Susanna. The mastic tree—a tree not found in these parts, the fragrant resin of which is used as incense. "Thou hast lied against thy own head," Daniel says to the wicked judge; that means to thy own destruction. The witnesses contradicting themselves, the assembly knew that she was innocent. Daniel became great in the eyes of the people, who greatly respected him.

D. Commentary.—1. *Fortitude.* Susanna found herself in an extremely difficult position. If she had consented to sin, she would have lost thereby the friendship of God and heaven. If she did not consent, then she would be dishonored before the whole multitude, condemned and put to death. Nevertheless, she would rather die than offend God. She possessed, therefore, the virtue of fortitude. In what does fortitude consist? (cf. LXXVIII.). 2. *How to Overcome Temptations against Chastity.* We may learn of Susanna how to act in time of temptation, especially in temptations against chastity. When this shameful sin was suggested to Susanna she immediately thought of God's presence. The thought of God, then, is the best means against temptation. Then she cried loudly for help. So, too, should we act under such circumstances; if there is no other means of escaping from sin, then cry aloud for help. 3. *Attributes of God.* (a) His omnipresence. The wicked judges sought to tempt Susanna to sin by suggesting to her that "no one saw them." But Susanna knew that One saw them, namely, God. Therefore she said: "It is

better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord" (Dan. xiii. 23). Of what attributes of God did Susanna think, therefore? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? (b) His eternity and omniscience. Susanna prayed to the eternal God. What do you mean by saying "God is eternal"? "Who knowest hidden things, and knowest all things." What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? (c) His justice. Susanna, the virtuous and chaste wife, was saved from death by God's providence, while the two villains who sought her ruin had to undergo that very death which they planned for Susanna. Thus God rewarded her virtue, and punished her accusers for their wickedness. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"?

E. Moral Application.—Whenever you are tempted to unchastity, think instantly of God's presence.

LXXXIII.—NABUCHODONOSOR'S DREAM.

A. Preparation.—Daniel's wisdom and power of prophecy came again into prominence when King Nabuchodonosor had a strange dream, which, however, he could not remember. No man except Daniel could recall the dream and give its significance. We shall hear about it in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) The king's wrath against the magicians and wise men. (b) Daniel's prayer heard. (c) Significance of the dream.

C. Explanation.—(a) The dream. The king had a vision in his dream, but afterward forgot what he had seen, and only the impression remained that in the dream he had experienced great fear. Nabuchodonosor sent for the wise men to explain the meaning of the dream, which, not being omniscient, they could not do. Daniel and his friends were also sent for, because they, too, belonged to the wise men of the land. (b) Daniel tells what Nabuchodonosor saw in his dream, about the statue of gold and the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, that is to say of itself, and how this stone broke the statue to pieces (Dan. ii. 34). (c) And the king spoke to Daniel and said: "Verily, your God is the God of gods" (meaning the supreme ruler, even over the pagan gods, idols) "and Lord of kings." Daniel was advanced to a high station.

D. Commentary.—I. *Even the Heathen were not Forsaken by God.* In the story of the Tower of Babel we learned that God abandoned to their evil inclinations the wicked people who, refusing

to obey Him, worshipped idols. Later we learned how He chose the God-fearing Abraham, and made him the patriarch of the great Israelitish race, in whom the true faith and the hope of the Redeemer were preserved among men. Yet God had not entirely forsaken the heathens. Now and again He sent to them pious and enlightened men, who proclaimed to them the true faith and promised the Redeemer. Jonas, for instance, was one of these men, and so was Daniel, of whom we now speak. God revealed to Daniel the king's dream, whereby Nabuchodonosor was moved to acknowledge that "Your God is the God of gods," thereby acknowledging that the God of Israel is the true God, and that he had hitherto worshipped false gods. At the same time God pointed, through Daniel, in the interpretation of the dream, to the coming Redeemer and to His powerful kingdom. 2. *The Twelfth Messianic Prophecy.* According to the interpretation of Nabuchodonosor's dream revealed by God to Daniel there were to succeed (and actually did succeed) to the mighty kingdom of Babylon (the head of gold), (a) the Median kingdom of Cyrus (the kingdom of silver), (b) the Macedonian kingdom of Alexander the Great, the conqueror of the world (the brazen kingdom), (c) the Roman Empire (the kingdom of iron), which, however, was not solid internally, and therefore was split up into many smaller kingdoms (hence the feet of iron and clay). "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall stand for ever" (Dan. ii. 44). Daniel indicated thereby the kingdom of God upon earth, the Church, which has taken unto herself all the kingdoms of the universe and will never be destroyed. "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." 3. *The Church is Universal, or Catholic.* The stone which crushed the statue became a great rock and filled the whole earth. The Church founded by Christ had a small beginning, but in a short time spread among the different nations, and is spreading ever more and more. What marks, accordingly, does the true Church, founded by Christ, possess? Why is the Roman Church manifestly catholic, or universal?

E. *Moral Application.*—Be grateful to God for the grace of being children of the true Church. Show your gratitude by obeying your Mother, the Church, in all her commandments. Remember the saying of St. Cyprian: "They will not have God for their Father who have not the Church for their Mother."

LXXXIV.—THE THREE YOUNG MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE.

A. *Preparation*.—Although King Nabuchodonosor had acknowledged the God of the Jews as the supreme God, still he did not give up his idolatry. He caused an idol to be set up on a pillar and ordered all his subjects to worship it. Daniel's three friends would not comply. How they were to be punished for this, and how they were miraculously saved by God, will be told in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The strong faith of the youths. (b) Their punishment and miraculous rescue. (c) Effect of these miracles.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) King Nabuchodonosor made a pillar of gold; that means a pillar covered with gold plate, upon which probably stood the image of the idol Bel. At the dedication of the same (that means upon the day when the pillar was to be worshipped for the first time), all present prostrated themselves before it with the exception of the three youths. Daniel was not present upon that day. (b) "Who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hands"?—that means there is no God powerful enough to set you free. "If you do not worship the idol, you shall be instantly cast into the fire"; the three youths made known their perfect resignation to the will of God, and their firm determination to die rather than worship idols. (c) The king was astonished because the youths were not burned; he was frightened by the miracle which he beheld in the furnace, for he saw four young men, and the form of the fourth is like "a son of the gods"; that is to say, not like a human but like a supernatural being. "Not a hair of their heads was singed"—whereby we perceive that the fire had no power over them.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The First Commandment and the Worshiping of Images*. Nabuchodonosor required his subjects to worship a statue; that means to give to it divine honors. Why was this wrong? Whom alone must we adore? In which commandment does God command this? What is the first commandment? What does it forbid? We Christians, too, have statues in our churches and homes, namely, images of Christ and the saints. Is it allowed to venerate the pictures of Christ and of the saints? But does it not say: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image"? Is it not superstition to pray before statues? 2. *Lawful Disobedience toward Superiors*. The three youths were disobedient to the king by not prostrating themselves and adoring the statue. Was this act of disobedience a sin? In which cases may we refuse obedience to parents and superiors? 3. *God's Omnipotence and Justice*. It was

manifestly a miracle that the fire, contrary to nature, had no power over the young men. Who worked this miracle? What do we say of God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipotent"? By miraculously preserving the lives of these youths in the midst of the fire God thus rewarded them for their steadfastness and their obedience to His commandments. But those who threw them into the furnace He punished according to merit. What do you mean by saying "God is just"?

E. Moral Application.—See that you always faithfully observe the first commandment. Honor God without fear of wicked persons. If it ever seems difficult for you to profess your faith publicly, remember the words of our Saviour, "Whoso confesses me before men, him will I also confess before my heavenly Father."

LXXXV.—BALTASSAR'S SACRILEGE AND PUNISHMENT.

A. Preparation.—What Daniel had said in his interpretation, that the dream of Nabuchodonosor, viz., that other kingdoms would succeed the Babylonians, was in part already fulfilled under the reign of the wicked son and successor of that king. In the following story we shall learn more about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Baltassar's sacrilege. The mysterious hand. (b) The mysterious words interpreted by Daniel. (c) Baltassar's punishment.

C. Explanation.—(a) The king Baltassar prepared a great feast (Dan. v. 1), to which all the nobles of the realm were invited. They drank out of the vessels of gold and silver which the king's father, Nabuchodonosor, had carried away from the Temple at Jerusalem, and which had been used only in the divine service. (b) Daniel tells Baltassar: "Thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord"; that means thou hast rebelled against him, because thou hast desecrated and misused the sacred vessels dedicated to His service. "Thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting," which means, in proportion to thy wicked deeds thou hast done so little good that thou art not worthy to live any longer. (c) The same night Baltassar was slain by his brother-in-law, after which the kingdom was so divided that north Babylonia was incorporated into the Median, south Babylonia into the Persian kingdom.

D. Commentary.—I. *Intemperance and its Consequences.* Baltassar had partaken of too much wine, so that he was drunk. What is this sin called? What sin do we commit by intemperance in eating and drinking? Intemperance is one of the seven capital sins, so-

called because many other sins arise from them. What other sin was the result of Baltassar's intemperance? Holy Scripture says drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of heaven. 2. *Sacrilege*. Baltassar caused to be brought in the vessels dedicated to the service of God, consecrated vessels, that he, his wives and the nobles, might drink from them. It was a profanation of sacred articles, a sacrilege. 3. *Divine Justice and Faithfulness*. Baltassar's shameful crime soon met its punishment. God allowed the impious king to be slain that same night. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? That which God had announced through Daniel was thus fulfilled. The kingdom of Babylon was divided between the Medes and Persians. What do we say of God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"?

E. *Moral Application*.—Avoid intemperance in eating and drinking. You do not confer any benefit upon your body by eating or drinking immoderately; you are far more likely to undermine your health by intemperance. Remember: "By surfeiting many have perished: but he that is temperate shall prolong life" (Ecclus. xxxvii. 34).

LXXXVI.—THE GOD BEL. DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

A. *Preparation*.—Cyrus, the Persian king, who soon took possession of Babylon, took great liking to Daniel. The king's subjects, on the contrary, hated Daniel and sought to take his life. But God saved him in a miraculous way. The following story will tell us about it.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The king is convinced of the impotence of Bel and of the dragon. (b) Revenge of the Babylonians. (c) Miraculous preservation of Daniel in the lions' den. (d) His deliverance from the same; punishment of his enemies.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "The new king"; that is to say, Cyrus. He asked Daniel why he would not adore Bel? Daniel explains to the king how it was impossible for Bel to eat and drink. The king then had food placed before Bel, and withdraws after Daniel had sifted fine ashes on the floor, that they might know if any one had entered. (b) Daniel brings about destruction of the idolized dragon, i. e., a great serpent, whereupon the Babylonians became furious and demanded his being delivered up to them. The king delivers him up for fear of his own life, and they cast him into a lions' den—a deep cave, where seven of these animals were kept. (c) An angel, by the force of

his spirit (that means in an instant), transports Habacuc to the den of lions. Daniel eats the food, having been for six days without food of any kind. (d) The king comes to bewail Daniel, namely, his death.

D. Commentary.—1. *Zeal for God's Glory.* Daniel gave proof of this by doing all in his power to convince the Babylonians of the worthlessness and impotence of their false gods, that idolatry might be abolished, without caring as to whether the Babylonians hated and persecuted him for it. Daniel loved the true God, adored Him, and was desirous that the Babylonians likewise should know, love and worship the true God. When do we adore God in our heart? 2. *God's Omnipotence and Goodness.* The lions desisted from savageness, and, contrary to their nature, left Daniel unhurt. God brought this about. He "shut the lions' jaws," by virtue of His omnipotence, which nothing can withstand. A second proof of the divine omnipotence was the carrying of Habacuc from Judea to Babylon, a distance of 2,400 miles, in an instant. What do you mean by saying "God is omnipotent"? For his zeal for God's glory, by which Daniel sought to rid the Babylonians of their idol worship, he was cast into the lions' den. Therefore God showed His love and goodness toward him in several ways. He protected him from the wild animals and sent food to him through the prophet Habacuc. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 3. *Grace before Meals.* When Habacuc appeared with food in the lions' den Daniel did not seize it hastily, although very hungry, but he first thanked God, who had thought of him in His goodness. Neither should we sit down to the table without first saying grace. When, particularly, ought we therefore to pray?

E. Moral Application.—Do you always say grace before and after meals? Remember that those who do not pray before and after meals are like reasonless animals, that eat their portion without thanks to the one who gave the food.

REVIEW OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

1. Short account of this period. 2. Reiteration of Messianic prophecies. 3. What prophets were active during this time? 4. Under which kings and under what rule were the Jews during this period?

PERIOD AFTER THE CAPTIVITY OF BABYLON (536 B. C.).

LXXXVII.—THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY. REBUILDING OF TEMPLE AND OF CITY. THE LAST PROPHECTS.

A. *Preparation*.—The days of the Babylonian captivity were approaching their termination. After it had lasted for seventy years, the king, Cyrus, granted permission to the Jews for their return. How the people rejoiced! Thousands of them gathered hastily and turned their way toward home. We shall read of this now.

B. *Narration*.—(a) End of the captivity. (b) Building of the Temple. (c) The prophets Aggeus and Zacharias. (d) Building of the city. (e) Ingratitude of the people. Malachias. (f) Jesus Sirach and the book of Wisdom.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) When the Jews were led away captive, in the year 606 B. C., God promised that they should not always remain in affliction or captivity. In the seventieth year of their captivity, in the year 536 B. C., the silver and golden vessels were restored to them, and about 40,000 Jews returned to Judea, former kingdom of Juda. (b) They immediately built an altar for burnt offerings in the same place where it had formerly stood. Then they laid foundations for a new temple, and within a year's time it was in course of construction. (c) This temple, although in magnificence not equal to the old, "was to be more glorious, because the desired of all nations" would be seen in it; that means the Messiah was to appear in this temple. Also the walls were rebuilt to fortify Jerusalem against the attacks of enemies. The Persian king Artaxerxes commissioned Nehemias to go to Jerusalem and urge the people to rebuild the walls. Nehemias assists Esdras by obtaining many favors for him from the king. The Samaritans wanted to lay siege to Jerusalem; they were angry at not having been allowed to take part in the erection of the temple. The Samaritans were driven off by force of arms. (d) "Ecclesiasticus," the book of Jesus Sirach, a collection of exhortations, instructions, rules of life and eulogies. The sacred scriptures of the Old Testament were translated into Greek by seventy-two Jewish scholars about 300 B. C., and since the Greek language was then the language of the educated classes, it was made accessible to many pagans, who thus became acquainted with the true faith and the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *God's Mercy and Faithfulness*. Although the Jews had sinned grievously against God by despising His exhortations, warnings and threats, and by persecuting His prophets,

yet God had again compassion upon them, and because He foresaw that in captivity they would acknowledge and repent their injustice He had promised to them their eventual return from captivity. What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? "After seventy years shall be accomplished." This promise God kept, as history shows. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? 2. *The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Prophecies Concerning the Messias.* (a) The prophet Aggeus prophesied that the magnificence of the second temple would be greater than that of the first one because the Messias would there appear. As a matter of fact, in magnificence the second temple was inferior to the first, but not in glory; for the "divine glory" filled it when the divine Redeemer was presented here as a child, when as a boy twelve years old He was an object of admiration, and when as man He impressed the multitude with reverence, fear and wonder by His teaching and His miracles. (b) Zacharias proclaimed that the Redeemer as king, but not, according to worldly ideas, rich and powerful, but poor and as the true Saviour, would make His solemn entry into Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass, which actually took place shortly before His bitter passion and death. (c) Malachias predicted the rejection of the Jewish sacrifice and the establishment of a new and more perfect sacrifice, which would not be confined to one single place, like the sacrifice of the Jews, but would be offered up in all places as a pure (therefore unbloody) oblation. What is this perpetual sacrifice, as prophesied by Malachias? Prove that the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is really the sacrifice foretold by Malachias.

E. *Moral Application.*—You have the happiness of being able to assist daily at holy Mass. Make use of this opportunity frequently, and remember that there is no more effective means to honor and adore God, or to beg for grace, than at this most blessed Sacrifice, which is as great and as perfect as God Himself.

LXXXVIII.—ESTHER.

A. *Preparation.*—Although the king, Cyrus, had granted to the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem, a great many of them remained in the Persian realm. Through the cunning of a certain man they were put in peril of their lives, but were saved through the courage of a woman named Esther. The following story treats of this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Mardochai's solicitude for Esther. The res-

cue of the king. (b) Aman's promotion and his hatred of the Jews. (c) Esther's brave intercession. The first repast with the queen. (d) Mardochai's promotion. (e) The second repast with the queen. Fall of Aman and rescue of the Jews.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Mardochai was Esther's foster-father, she being an orphan. Esther found favor in the sight of Assuerus (i. e., Xerxes I.), but she had not told him of her nationality, because Mardochai had advised her not to do so. Two court attendants conspired against the king; the plot was discovered by Mardochai, who informed Assuerus through Esther. The conspirators are put to death. (b) Aman was a Mede whom the king had promoted to a high office. Because Mardochai would not bend his knee before him he became furious, and resolved upon his destruction. In order to accomplish this he tried to bring about the extermination of all the Jews in the kingdom. Accordingly, he caused an edict to be published, that on a certain day every Jew, including women and children, should be slain and their possessions confiscated. (c) Esther went to the king to plead for her people and was received with an angry frown, because it was against the law for any subject to appear before the king unless sent for. Aman is delighted because honored with an invitation to banquet with the king and queen. (d) The king bids Aman go to Mardochai and confer the highest honors upon the very one whom Aman desired to have executed. What a humiliation for the haughty and revengeful Aman! (e) Upon the king asking Esther what she wishes, she asks that her life and the lives of her people be spared. By this request Esther confesses that she is a Jewess.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Pride*. Aman was a proud man. Although invested with the highest dignities at court, still he was not satisfied. When the king asked him, "What ought to be done to the man whom the king wished to honor"? he immediately thought of himself, and in his pride made unbecoming pretensions, by which he exalted himself inordinately. How do we sin by pride? Pride is one of the capital sins, so called because other sins proceed from them. We shall see what other sins proceeded from Aman's pride: (a) Because Mardochai would not bow down before him Aman hated him. (b) In his hatred against Mardochai he resolved to have all the Jews slain. How do we sin against the person and life of our neighbor? (c) In order to obtain the king's consent to his project Aman calumniated the Jews. How do we sin by calumny? 2. *Miraculous Dispensation of Divine Providence*. The wicked Aman had resolved to slay all the Jews in the kingdom of Persia. The edict had already gone forth into every part of the realm and had caused great consternation and lamenting among the Jews. For Mardochai, however, whom he especially hated, Aman had caused a gibbet to be erected, near his

house, that he might see him die. But "man proposes, and God disposes." How wonderful were God's dispensations in this case. He brought it about that the king, passing a sleepless night, asks for the year books to be produced and read to him, by which Mardochai's discovery of the plot against his life is brought to his memory. Aman is made to confer honors and distinction upon Mardochai, and finally dies upon the very gibbet he had erected for the other. Thus does God rule and guide the world, and frustrate the wicked plans of men. How does God rule the world? What do we call the divine solicitude in preserving and ruling the world? 3. *Esther a Type, or Figure, of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* Esther was raised from her lowliness to be a queen; Mary had the unspeakable dignity of being made queen of heaven. The reason for Esther's exaltation was the delight which the king took in her virtues; Mary, too, was exalted to her high dignity on account of her virtues. As Esther alone was made exempt from the rigid law of the king's court, so also Mary alone, of all human beings, was exempt from the law of original sin. As Esther knelt before the king's throne to plead for the people, so does Mary intercede for mankind before the throne of God.

E. *Moral Application.*—Venerate diligently the Blessed Virgin and she will pray for you before the throne of God. Bear in mind that a devout servant of the Blessed Virgin will not be lost. (The lesson should be closed with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin.)

LXXXIX.—ELEAZAR (170 B. C.).

A. *Preparation.*—We will now return to the Jews, who had re-entered their country. They remained subjects of the king of Persia even after that in their own country. The Persian rule lasted from 536 to 331 B. C. The Jews were ruled by governors, to whom they paid tribute (tithes), otherwise they were independent and free. When, in the year 331 B. C., Alexander the Great, of Macedonia, had conquered the kingdom of Persia, the Jews came under the dominion of Macedonia. After Alexander's death, in 323 B. C., the Jews, after a long strife between Egypt and Syria for their country, came under the dominion of the king of Egypt (301 to 230 B. C.), after which they became subjects of the Syrian kings. Under the latter they suffered greatly. The Syrian king Antiochus was especially cruel to them, as the following story will show.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Oppression of the Jews by Antiochus. (b) Eleazar's steadfastness.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) The Syrians worshipped an idol, namely, the Greek

god Zeus. (b) Antiochus required Eleazar to eat the flesh of swine, and because he refused he was tortured, his hands and feet were stretched out upon a plank and he was beaten. His friends tried to persuade him to yield, to make pretense only of eating the forbidden meat, but he refused, saying it would be a bad example for the young. Nor would he seek safety in flight, saying that God would punish him if he even only pretended to apostatize from his faith.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Law of Abstinence*. The Jews were forbidden to eat the flesh of swine because it was considered unclean. To us Christians a law of abstinence is also given. On what day are we obliged to abstain from eating flesh meat? (cf. XXXI.). *Scandal-giving*. If Eleazar had done as he was advised the young people would have been scandalized, and he would have given them a bad example. For the young people, who would not know that Eleazar was only pretending, would have been led by Eleazar's bad example to transgress the law under similar circumstances, and thus would have sinned (apostatized). How do we injure our neighbor in body and soul? 3. *Eleazar's Virtues*. This old man, of over ninety years of age, a true model of beautiful virtues. Worthy of admiration is: (a) His steadfastness in the faith. The cruel Antiochus would force him to apostatize. But Eleazar would suffer torture and martyrdom, give his life, rather than fall away from his faith. When is our faith steadfast? (b) His love of sincerity and right-doing, by which he considers it a "disgrace" to allow lawful meat to be secretly brought and then to pretend that he was eating swine's flesh. He would rather suffer martyrdom than sin by hypocrisy. When do we sin by hypocrisy? (c) His profound piety. "I cannot escape from the hand of the Almighty, living or dead." Hence he feared to offend God, and underwent the most agonizing sufferings till death released him. "Lord, thou knowest that I bear this cheerfully because I fear thee."

E. *Moral Application*.—Learn from Eleazar to profess your faith steadfastly, not fearing whether it will bring injury and disgrace upon you. Never, under no circumstances, must we deny our faith. May the fear of God, from whom you can not escape, alive or dead, preserve you from this sin!

XC.—THE SEVEN MACHABEES.

A. *Preparation*.—King Antiochus was even more cruel to the seven Machabees and their mother than to Eleazar, when they would not renounce their faith. We shall hear about this in the story.

B. *Narration*.—The heroic death (a) of the eldest of the seven brothers; (b) of the five brothers next in age; (c) of the youngest, and of the mother.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) The heroic death of these seven brothers being related in the Second Book of Machabees, they are called the seven Machabees. Without doubt they were martyred at Antioch, the residence of King Antiochus, and they probably belonged to the large Jewish population of that city. (b) The third brother tells the king that he had received his tongue and his hands from heaven, i. e., from God. (c) The mother exhorts her youngest son in her own language, namely, in the language of the Jews. "Thou shalt not fear this tormentor, but being made a worthy partner with thy brethren," meaning prove by thy steadfastness that thou art no less devout than thy brothers. "For we suffer thus from sins" (the sins of the whole nations).

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Steadfast Faith*. The seven brothers, as well as their mother, possessed an admirable steadfastness in the faith. Neither alluring promises nor awful torments and sufferings could induce the brothers to be disloyal to their faith. The mother's steadfastness is still more worthy of admiration. How must this great woman have suffered when she saw six of her sons martyred? And yet she encourages her last and only surviving son to be worthy of his brothers and to suffer death. She would sooner lose him than persuade him to apostatize. When is our faith steadfast? The reason of the steadfastness of these eight heroes of the faith is found in their firm belief in God and His revelations. They knew (a) that One mightier than the cruel Antiochus watched over them, "the king of the world"; (b) that God is infinitely just, and that He would restore to them the lives that they sacrificed for His sake: "I have received these from heaven, and I hope to receive them again." "The king of the world will raise us up who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life." Armed with so firm a faith, they feared not the king, who could only take their earthly life, but could not harm their souls, and they feared not the frightful torments. 2. *Lawful Disobedience*. Although it was their king who gave his commands to the seven brothers and their mother, they were not able to obey him, because he commanded something forbidden by God. Here words of the apostle are applicable: "We must obey God more than man." In which instances must we not obey even our parents and superiors?

E. *Moral Application*.—You also will be often tempted to trans-

gress God's commandments. Your temptations, however, are trifling, in comparison with the severe trials of the Machabees and their mother. Remain steadfast and faithful to God. Think of God in temptations and say: "O God, I would rather die than sin."

XCI.—DEATH OF KING ANTIOCHUS.

A. Preparation.—The cruel King Antiochus, who tortured the Machabees so frightfully, not long afterward finds a miserable end, of which we shall learn in this story.

B. Narration.—(a) The incurable sickness, and (b) the sad end of Antiochus.

C. Explanation.—(a) The punishment (cf. XC.). Antiochus returns with dishonor from a distant country (Persia), where he had suffered defeat. In his fury about the defeat, and also about the revolt of the Jews, he desired to revenge himself upon them, and to reduce Jerusalem to a graveyard. He was grievously wounded; breaking his limbs, he was obliged to be carried on a litter. Worms (maggots) came forth from his body. (b) Realizing his sins and wickedness, he came to understand that his misfortune was due to his numerous misdeeds. He wanted to make costly presents to the Jews, wished to defray at his own expense the cost of the Jewish sacrifices; to give the Jews their freedom, even to become a Jew himself, and to travel throughout all countries proclaiming the power of God. But his repentance was unreal, and he died a miserable death in the year 163 B. C.

D. Commentary.—1. *God's Justice and Omniscience.* Antiochus was a cruel king, who had shed much innocent blood. Well merited punishment overtook him. He who had often tortured others was now himself tormented by an incurable, loathsome sickness, which was so hideous that no one would go near him, and, abandoned by his own people, Antiochus met a miserable end. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? Antiochus' repentance was not accepted by God. His conversion was not sincere. God sees the heart. He knows the most secret thoughts. He knew the wicked king's motives and knew that he only made these promises in the fear of death, and that, once more well, he would again persecute and ill-treat the Jews. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? 2. *Natural Contrition.* Antiochus, it is true, realized his sins and regretted them, but not because he had thereby offended God, but

on account of their natural bad consequences—on account of the painful and incurable sickness. A natural contrition of this kind is not sufficient for the forgiveness of sins. Contrition must be supernatural. When is contrition supernatural? Would it suffice to repent of our sins on account of the temporal harm that results to us from them?

E. Moral Application.—Repent of your sins every evening, because through them you have grievously offended God, who through the day has granted you so many spiritual and corporal blessings.

XCII.—JUDAS MACHABEUS.

A. Preparation.—The harsh treatment which the Jews had suffered at the hands of the inhuman King Antiochus, of Syria, embittered them and drove them to revolt against the Syrians. After many battles they finally succeeded in defeating them, regaining their freedom. The following story will tell us about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Commencement of the combat under Mathathias. (b) Judas' wonderful victory. (c) The sacrifice of propitiation for the dead. (d) Judas' vision and the defeat of Nicanor. (e) Death of Judas and final deliverance of the Jewish nation.

C. Explanation.—(a) Modin, a city in Judea, to the northwest of Jerusalem. Mathathias destroyed the altars of the idols which had been set up by Antiochus, and made war upon the heathen, namely, upon Antiochus and the Syrians. (b) Upon his death, in the year 166 B. C., he was succeeded by his son Judas, who was extraordinarily strong and powerful. He labored the enemies of the Jews with his sword as if it were a hammer, striking them to the earth. He purified the Temple, which had been desecrated and defiled by Antiochus. He made war also upon the neighboring people, the Edomites, Ammonites and Arabians. In the battle five men with shining armor came from heaven to his assistance; they were angels in human form. (c) "Heathen charms"—little presents which had been offered or dedicated to the gods (amulets), and were worn in honor of the gods, and supposed by the superstitious to render them invulnerable. Judas found these amulets upon the Jews killed in battle, which explained the reason why they had fallen, namely, as a punishment for their sinful actions. He sends twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem (about \$2,000), for which sacrifices were to be offered for the repose of their souls. (d) "Onias," assassinated in the year 170 B. C. (e) Judas and his brother fought for the "good cause," that is to say, for the deliverance of their country and for freedom to practise their religion. They fought against tremendous odds, 800 Jews against 25,000 of the enemy. "Jonathan," a brother of Judas, was assassi-

nated by his enemies in the year 143 B. C. "Simon," another brother, succeeded in liberating his country entirely from Syrian dominion, for which he was made hereditary prince and high priest.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Doctrine of Purgatory.* Our reason alone must tell us that there must be a special place for souls who depart this world without mortal sin but burdened with venial sins, or deserving of temporal punishment for which penance has not yet been done. It would be contrary to the infinite justice of God if such souls were cast into hell like those burdened with mortal sin; nor could the infinite sanctity of God admit such souls uncleansed into heaven, the place of the pure and holy. We call this place of cleansing purgatory, because souls are purged there of their defiling stains (like gold is tried in the furnace). That which our reason perceives is confirmed by this historical event. Judas collected an amount of silver in order to have sacrifices of propitiation offered up for those fallen in battle, "that they may be loosed from their sins." Judas therefore could not have thought that these souls were in hell, because no one can be released from there; nor could he have supposed that they were in heaven, for there no propitiatory sacrifice would be needed. There remains, then, only the conception of an intermediate place where souls go who, although in a state of grace, yet did not depart this life perfectly without the stain of venial sin. What souls go to purgatory? Prayer for the poor souls. As the souls in purgatory can do nothing to free themselves from that place of suffering, the duty devolves upon us of remembering them in our prayers. For this reason, therefore, Holy Scripture commends Judas in the words: "It is a holy and wholesome thought," etc. It is also a great spiritual work of mercy (to pray to God for the living and the dead). Which are the spiritual works of mercy? (All Souls' Day. Devotions for the holy souls. Month of the holy souls, November.) 3. *The Invocation of the Saints.* In the explanation of the first commandment of God we were taught that it is right and salutary to venerate the saints and to invoke their intercession with God. It would be useless to do this unless the saints can hear us. This story tells us how the high priest Onias and the prophet Jeremias prayed in heaven for their oppressed brethren upon earth. The saints of heaven therefore know of our sufferings and oppressions and take interest in them. For this reason it is salutary for us to have recourse to them in all our necessities and to invoke their intercession. What does the Catholic Church teach regarding the

reverence and invocation of the saints? Because the saints take an interest in our welfare you have in Baptism been given the name of a saint, who is your special patron saint, and to whom you should have recourse in every important matter. So have parishes, even some countries, patron saints. What is the name of the patron saint of our parish?

E. Moral Application.—Venerate your patron saint and invoke his or her intercession, especially in all matters of importance (for instance, in choosing a state of life). But in order that your petitions may be heard, strive to imitate their virtues.

XCIII.—THE FULNESS OF TIME.

A. Preparation.—The four thousand years which God, in His wisdom, had ordained as a period of preparation of mankind for the Redeemer were approaching their end. In the following history, which is the last of the Old Testament, we shall be told in what a deplorable condition mankind found itself shortly before the coming of the Redeemer.

B. Narration.—(a) Deplorable condition of the Jews and pagans. (b) Longing for the Redeemer. (c) Fulfilling of the prophecy of the patriarch Jacob.

C. Explanation.—After the death of the Machabees, although the people still recognized the one true God, and exteriorly observed the forms of the law, their hearts were far from Him; that means their divine worship was of the lips only, their hearts not responding. Two parties, or sects, rose up among the Jews. The "Pharisees"—those who observed the letter of the law faithfully, but not for love of God, but in order to be seen and praised by men; they were therefore hypocrites. They were proud, looked upon themselves as just and despised every one else. The "Sadducees," on the other hand, did not trouble at all about the law and its precepts, but lived for pleasure only, frivolously and luxuriously, because they did not believe in the life of the soul after death. (b) Since the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity the belief in the true God had spread abroad, because many of the Jews had remained in foreign countries. The permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was given in the year 454 B. C. If we deduct therefrom the 70 prophetic weeks of years, there remain 36 years for the time after the birth of Christ. But since it was said that Christ would be put to death in the middle of the last week of years, and deducting 3 years, the half of a week of years, from 36, there remains 33 years, the age of Christ at His death. (c) The successors of the Machabees lived in continued warfare, and as a last resort they called upon the powerful Romans to arbitrate between the warring parties. A large army of the Romans, under Pompey, was at

the time in Syria. Herod, a stranger, was appointed king of the Jews. Thus was the scepter taken from Juda, for the new king of the Jews, Herod, was no Jew. He was, moreover, a cruel man, who had shed much innocent blood.

D. Commentary.—I. Review of the Old Law. The Old Law was the preparation for the New Law; the four thousand years which preceded the advent of the Messiah should serve mankind to prepare for the Redeemer. Man was destined to know, to love and to serve God, his Creator and Lord, and thereby to attain to eternal happiness, in perfect communion with God. Through the fall in paradise, however, man became unfaithful to his vocation; by sin he separated himself from God and plunged himself and his descendants into great misery. Nevertheless, the object upon which the unchanging God had determined in His counsels was not to be frustrated by man's sin. Hence He began the slow training of the human race. In the four thousand years of the Old Law mankind was to perceive the misery into which sin had plunged it and prepare itself for the Redeemer. Soon after the fall God had promised our unhappy first parents a Redeemer, who would appear at a future time to remove from them the curse of sin, and who would render the satisfaction due to the Godhead, grievously offended by sin. If this hope of the Messiah was to be continued in mankind, then, above all things, the true faith must not be lost. Hence, in the training of the human race in the Old Law, the problem was to be solved of preserving upon earth the true faith and the hope of the Redeemer so intimately connected with it, and thus to prepare mankind for the redemption from sin. What means and ways did divine Providence make use of (a) to preserve the *true* faith among men? Among the descendants of our first parents sin and unbelief soon prevailed. In order to protect the true faith from utter destruction God raised up from among the wicked just men, who exhorted their fellow men to do penance and return to God (Adam, Enoch, Noe). As, however, their efforts were fruitless, God destroyed sinful mankind by the flood. Only the just Noe and his family were saved. Noe's descendants again became wicked. Then God chose a family, that of the pious Abraham, through the means of which the true faith and the hope of the Redeemer was to be preserved. God transplanted Abraham and his family into a strange country, the land of Chanaan, which on account of its secluded position was well suited for the evolution of a nation, because Abraham here in seclusion would be better able to preserve his faith and keep it pure. God promised this land to Abraham and

to his descendants as a lasting possession. When, however, the sons of Jacob began to contract marriages with the pagan inhabitants of the land of Chanaan a new danger rose up for the true faith; furthermore, owing to the friendly relations with the heathen Chanaanites, the possession of the Promised Land became doubtful. Therefore God willed that Jacob and his sons should wander into Egypt. Here the descendants of Jacob became a great nation, which held aloof from the pagan Egyptians and kept its faith pure. Innumerable oppressions on the part of the Egyptians caused the people of Israel to yearn again for the Promised Land. Through Moses God led His people back to Chanaan, which country Israel now sought to acquire by force of arms. We see that whenever the chosen people—the keepers of the true faith—became unfaithful to their exalted vocation, God gave them into the power of their enemies. Then, in consequence of severe oppression and misfortune, the people returned again to God. Impiety and apostasy from the faith resulted in the fall of both kingdoms of Israel, and in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Through this, two objects were accomplished by divine Providence: The Israelites were finally and permanently converted, remaining thereafter faithful to their God and faith; and, at the same time, the pagans were made acquainted with the true God and faith. After the return from the captivity the chosen people, in consequence of the severe punishments of God, reformed so earnestly that from that time until the advent of the Redeemer they fell away no more from the true faith. What means and ways did divine Providence employ to (b) preserve and confirm among men the *hope* of the Redeemer? Divine Providence attained this, in first line, through the preservation of the true faith, and also by sending, time and again, prophecies, signs and intimations concerning the future Redeemer, whereby His image was to be defined even more clearly. (Development of the Messianic prophecies.) By the scattering of the Jews among the heathen, and by the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Greek, the Messianic prophecies were made known also to the heathen. The unutterable misery into which sin had plunged mankind, and the knowledge that only God's assistance could bring salvation, animated the hope and desire for the Redeemer, and when the yearning had reached its climax the Saviour appeared, the salvation and expectation of the nations—Christ the Lord, to whom be honor and glory forever and ever! Why did the Redeemer not come until after the expiration of four

thousand years? 2. *The Advent*. Advent, the ecclesiastical time including the four Sundays preceding Christmas, is to recall to our mind the four thousand years before the coming (*adventus*) of the Redeemer. It is to be a time of earnest prayer and penance, to prepare ourselves for the advent of the Redeemer. To express this sentiment the priest appears during this season, feasts excepted, at Mass in violet or purple vestments, violet being the color of penance. The joyful hymn of praise, "*Gloria in excelsis*," is omitted during Advent, and at the conclusion of Mass the priest invites the faithful to diligent prayer with the words, *Benedicamus Domino* (instead of the usual *Ite missa est*). Advent occurs in a season when the days are short; darkness reigns on earth for the greater part of day. Somber and dark it was in the hearts of men before the coming of the Redeemer, for they "sat in darkness and in the shadow of death." In Advent the earth lies in the numbness of winter. The vegetation of the fields lacks life. Mankind, before the coming of the Redeemer, was spiritually dead and benumbed; it lacked the life of sanctifying grace.

E. *Moral Application*.—You are fortunate to live in a time when the Redeemer has appeared. Desire Him with fervor, and do your utmost to serve Him ever more perfectly by a faithful and conscientious observance of His commandments! If you do not, then the Redeemer has appeared in vain for you.

REVIEW OF THE TIME FROM THE RETURN FROM THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO THE ADVENT OF THE REDEEMER.

1. Brief recapitulation of this period. 2. What prophets were active during this time? 3. Further development of the Messianic prophecies. 4. The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament. 5. What is understood by "Pharisees" and "Sadducees"? 6. Where situated and upon what occasions were mentioned: (a) Antioch? (XC.); (b) Modin? (XCII.).

HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE BIRTH AND HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS.

I.—ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

A. Preparation.—At the time when the coming of the Redeemer was near, God sent the archangel Gabriel to a priest named Zachary, and announced to him that a son would be born to him who should be called John. Of this we shall learn more in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) Zachary and Elizabeth. (b) Announcement of John's birth. (c) Zachary's punishment.

C. Explanation.—(a) Herod, king of Judea. Herod was king of Judea, the southern part of Palestine, having for its capital Jerusalem, in the year 40 B. C., and he reigned until three years after Christ. Palestine at that time was divided into three provinces, Judea, Samaria and Galilee. The country east of the Jordan was called Pera. Zachary, an aged priest, and Elizabeth his wife dwelt in the mountains of Judea; they were just people, namely pious and God-fearing. They led a blameless life, a life without sin. (b) Since the time of David the priests had been grouped into twenty-four divisions, of which each division took charge of the holy services in the Temple for a week at a time. It was Zachary's turn to be at the Temple and for this reason he repaired to Jerusalem. The various priestly offices in the Temple were assigned by lot. Zachary was appointed to offer incense in the sanctuary. A multitude of the people prayed without; they were not permitted to enter the sanctuary. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zachary, announcing his prayer had been heard, and that his wife would bear a son. This son was to be filled with the Holy Ghost; he was to convert many of the children of Israel, meaning the Jews; he was to precede, go before, the Redeemer. He was to have the spirit and power of Elias; that means he would be as powerful, zealous and undaunted as the prophet Elias. He was to prepare "a perfect people"; that means prepare the people to receive the Gospel gladly into their hearts. (c) Zachary could not comprehend how so wonderful an event should come to pass; it was more than he had ever ventured to hope for. Hence he put the question through which he asked for a special token to confirm the truth of the angel's word. Gabriel tells him that he stands before God; that means that his place is near God, and that he therefore is an angel of high order. (d) The people were waiting outside, to receive the customary blessing. When they saw Zachary they understood that he had seen a vision. How did they know this? (Because he had become dumb and was greatly excited.)

D. Commentary.—1. *The Power of Prayer.* "The persevering

prayer of the just availeth much." The truth of these words of Holy Scripture will be shown us in this Biblical history. The just Zachary and his pious wife had for years prayed for a son. Now the archangel Gabriel announces to them that their prayer has been heard. How ought we to pray in order to be heard? 2. *The Redeemer's Advent Approaching*. The angel announced to Zachary that his son would precede the Redeemer, that the Redeemer therefore was soon to follow him. Thus the advent of the Messias was close at hand. 3. *Zachary's Incredulity*. The angel's words contained so much that was astonishing and miraculous that Zachary hesitated to believe, and therefore asked for a special sign. This was wrong. By this momentary doubt he committed sin. For punishment he was deprived of speech. In what way do we sin against faith?

E. *Moral Application*.—Combat zealously every doubt against faith. Be assured that the Church, in whose bosom so many saints have lived, possesses and proclaims the true faith.

II.—ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

A. *Preparation*.—The time was at hand when the long-expected Redeemer was to come into the world; God had chosen a pious virgin to be the Redeemer's mother, and He sent His archangel Gabriel to her to make this announcement. I will now tell you about this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The angel's salutation. (b) The announcement of the birth of Jesus.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Nazareth," in the province of Galilee. "Mary"; her parents were called Joachim and Anna, and were of the race of David. The archangel appeared to her in her chamber, where she was engaged in prayer, and said, "Hail, full of grace," meaning quite holy—without sin; "the Lord is with thee"; because she was holy and just, therefore God the Lord was with her and in her, dwelt, as it were, in her pure soul. (b) Mary was frightened at the angel's appearance, as Zachary had been. She wondered at the salutation, because it was an extraordinary greeting, which had never before been bestowed upon a mortal creature. "Thou hast found grace with God"; the infinite grace of becoming the mother of the ardently desired Redeemer was to be conferred upon her. David his father, or ancestor, because Mary descended from the royal house of David. "And of his kingdom there shall be no end"; that means He will found a spiritual kingdom. "How shall this be done?" Mary could not imagine how these words were to be fulfilled, as she had made a vow of virginity. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." The angel thereby reveals to her that she will become the mother of a son in a super-

natural manner, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. "The holy which shall be born of thee"—thy holy son—shall be called the Son of God, because the Holy Ghost co-operated at His incarnation. And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word," thereby giving her consent in faithful obedience to the divine plan. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus," meaning Saviour or Redeemer, because He shall redeem His people from sin.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Third Article of the Creed.* "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," etc. What the angel here said we confess to believe in the third article of the creed. What is the third article of the creed? The Son of God therefore became incarnate through the operation of the Holy Ghost; that means He received a body and a soul like ours. What is the meaning of the words "conceived of the Holy Ghost"?¹ 2. *Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Annunciation.* "Whom thou oh Virgin Mary didst conceive of the Holy Ghost." How the incarnation of the Lord was accomplished remains an unfathomable mystery to us. What do we call this mystery? Jesus, the holy infant that was to be born of Mary, was called by the angel the "Son of God." He was accordingly God and man at the same time. What, then, is Jesus Christ? The angel revealed this mystery to St. Joseph as well, and bade him to call Mary's holy infant Jesus (Redeemer), "for he will redeem his people." He therewith gives the reason why Jesus, the Son of God, should become incarnate, namely, to redeem the people from their sins. Why did the Son of God become man?² (a) Fulfillment of the promise which God had given to David. "I will give thee posterity and the throne of his kingdom shall be set up for all eternity. I shall be Father to him, and he will be my son." (O. T., LVIII.). Compare this with the words of the angel: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David, his fathers; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; and therefore the Holy that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." (b) The prophecy of Isaías: "Behold the Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (God with us), and "God Himself comes to redeem you" (O. T., LXXVII.). 3. *Mary's Virtues and High Dignity.* The angel told Mary that she was "full of grace," Mary co-operated faithfully with divine grace, and therefore she attained glorious virtues. Among her virtues chastity was paramount; she so loved this virtue that she promised God to remain always a pure virgin.

Furthermore, she possessed a firm faith. Although the message of the angel was incomprehensible to her, she did not doubt it for an instant, but believed his words. Her profound humility is worthy of admiration; she calls herself the handmaid of the Lord, although it had just been announced to her that she would become the Mother of God. (In remembrance of this announcement the Church celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25). Mary was exalted to the infinitely high dignity of being the Mother of God. For this reason we ought to venerate and invoke her above all other saints. God honored her, first of all, through the angel's salutation. After the example of God we frequently greet Mary with the words of the angel, namely, in the prayer called the Angelical Salutation, or "Hail Mary." Recite the Hail Mary. We venerate Mary as the Mother of God also in other prayers, as, for instance, in the "Angelus," in which the event of this Biblical story is commemorated. Recite the Angelus. When is this prayer usually said?

E. Moral Application.—Venerate the holy Mother of God fervently and devoutly. The Saints did this and they assure us that a devout servant of Mary will not be lost. Say often with great devotion the Hail Mary and the Angelus.

III.—MARY'S VISITATION.

A. Preparation.—Mary had been told by the angel that her cousin, Elizabeth, the pious wife of Zachary, would likewise bear a son. Hence she made ready to visit the latter in her home. I shall now tell you about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Mary's arrival and greeting extended by Elizabeth. (b) Mary's hymn of praise. *Magnificat*.

C. Explanation.—(a) At the time when the angel appeared to Mary her relatives lived in the mountains, a few miles west of Jerusalem. There lay the little hamlet where Zachary and Elizabeth dwelt. From Nazareth, Mary had to cover a distance of some two hundred miles. Her cousin was inspired by the Holy Ghost, who had revealed to her that Mary would become the Mother of God. She rejoiced to see the Mother of God, and she cried out in a loud voice: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb," namely, Jesus. "Whence is this to me?" namely, the high honor of a visit from the Blessed Virgin. (b) And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord," etc. She perceived from Elizabeth's words that the latter knew all that the angel had revealed to her, and she could no longer restrain her gladness. "Because he hath regarded the humility of

his handmaid"; that means although I am only a lowly maiden, still he has chosen me for the exalted dignity of the Mother of God. "For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"; and the following sentence tells us why: "For he that is mighty hath done great things to me"; choosing her to be the Mother of God. "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart." God frustrates the plans of the proud. "He hath received Israel, his servant," the people of Israel, and "hath been mindful of his mercy": of the promise (of the Redeemer) which God had made to Abraham and his descendants.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Divinity of Jesus.* From the words of Elizabeth, calling Mary the Mother of the Lord (meaning God), it follows that Jesus, Mary's son, is God. In which article of the creed do we profess our belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore God? What is the second article of the creed? 2. *Mary's Virtues.* (a) Her charity. For love of her cousin, and to participate in her motherly happiness, also to help her with her household duties, Mary went to visit her. Her charity surmounted the difficulties of a long journey not without perils. Mary therefore loved her relative sincerely. When is our love sincere? The Feast of Mary's Visitation is on the second day of July.—The Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary: The Visitation. (b) Her humility. Notwithstanding her exalted dignity she "hastened" to her relative in order to serve her. And when Elizabeth declared her to be "blessed," she gave glory to God alone, and called herself a lowly handmaiden. Mary was humble of heart.

E. Moral Application.—If you desire to please your heavenly Mother be charitable to your neighbors, and help them all you can.

IV.—BIRTH OF JOHN.

A. Preparation.—While Mary stayed with Elizabeth, the son promised to Zachary was born. This is told in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) Birth and naming of the child. (b) Zachary's hymn of praise. (c) Preparation of John for his vocation.

C. Explanation.—(a) "And then was fulfilled"; that is to say, the time has arrived which God had set for the birth of John. They proposed giving him his father's name, as was customary with the firstborn. His mother, however, wished him to be called John. Zachary, who had been dumb, recovers his speech after writing on a tablet "John is his name," the name announced by the angel. Every one was surprised (1) on account of

the unusual name, and (2) because Zachary regained power of speech. The "hand of the Lord," meaning the power of God which had just worked a miracle in Zachary. (b) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"—because of the child who was to precede the Redeemer—"he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people"—visited upon them grace and goodness. "And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High"; Zachary knew this from the angel's words, who had told him that John would "go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." "He was to prepare His ways"—that means the way to the hearts of men, which John by preaching penance was to prepare for the Gospel of the Lord, and by which he was to lead them to the knowledge of salvation (the true faith). (c) "The child grew up strong in spirit"; his spirit was strong in good and in virtues. "And was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel." This desert was on the western shore of what is now the Dead Sea.

D. Commentary.—1. *God's Truthfulness and Faithfulness.* God had revealed to Zachary, through the angel, that a son would be born to him, that many would rejoice at his birth, and that Zachary himself would remain dumb until the day when this should come to pass. Everything happened just as God had revealed. He kept His promise. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is true—faithful"? 2. *Gratitude for God's Blessings.* Zachary made use of his recovered speech to praise God, and to thank Him for graciously hearing his prayer—for the son bestowed upon him, and the redemption of his people from sin, which was now about to take place. By this thanksgiving he humbly adored God as the giver of all good. When do we adore God interiorly?

E. Moral Application.—Thank God for all the blessings which He grants you daily (life, health, etc.). The saints assure us that God would bestow many more blessings upon men if they were more grateful. (Morning and night prayers, grace before and after meals.)

V.—BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A. Preparation.—The time when the Redeemer was to appear in the world had now arrived. Mary repaired with St. Joseph to Bethlehem, where she gave birth to the Saviour. I will now tell you about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Arrival in Bethlehem and the birth of Our Lord. (b) The angel appearing to the shepherds. (c) The shepherds adoring. (d) The circumcision of Our Lord.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "The emperor Augustus," who at that time ruled the great Roman Empire. Palestine had by this time belonged to this empire since the year 40 B. C. Herod ruled in the name and by virtue of the Roman emperor. As the census was to be taken, all the people were required to go to their own city for enrolment; that means they had to go to the city in which the ancestors of their race had lived. Bethlehem is a few miles to the south of Jerusalem. All the inns there being overcrowded with guests, Mary and Joseph could not find shelter. Finally they came to a stable, used as a place of refuge in stormy weather by the shepherds and their flocks. In this place Mary brought forth her son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, a trough, from which the animals fed. (b) In the neighborhood, near the stable, some shepherds were watching their flocks, when the "brightness of God shone round about them"; that means the glory of heaven—a celestial light shone about them and illumined the night. An angel tells the shepherds not to be afraid, that Christ is born to them, the Messias announced by the prophets, and tells them by what sign they shall find Him. The shepherds started "at once" to find the Lord, after the angel had delivered his joyful message. (c) "Let us see this word that is come to pass"; without doubting they hastened upon their way, rejoicing. They found "Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger," as the angel had told them; they prostrated themselves and adored. The shepherds related what had happened to them, and Mary pondered all these words in her heart; that means she thought over them and compared with them those which the prophets and the angel had said.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Dispensation of Divine Providence.* In the year 725 B. C., God had revealed, through the prophet Micheas, that the Messias would be born in Bethlehem. Just before the birth of the Saviour, Mary lived at Nazareth. God so arranged it that the emperor Augustus gave order to have the entire population counted. To this end Joseph and Mary had to repair to Bethlehem, to have themselves enrolled. There Mary gave birth to the Redeemer, so that the prophecy of the prophet Micheas was fulfilled. God rules the world. What do you mean by that? The Third Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Nativity of Our Lord.—2. *The Holy Festival of the Nativity (Christmas).* According to tradition, Christ was born in the night from the 24th to the 25th December. For this reason we celebrate the Feast of the Lord's Nativity on the 25th December. On this feast priests are privileged to say three Masses. (Explain some Christmas hymns.) 3. *The Lord's Sufferings.* From the first moment of His existence Our Saviour desired to suffer for us. He was born in a strange country. At home, at least, He would

have had a human habitation, a soft bed. But here, among strangers, He had to be content with a place in a stable, the abode of animals. The Son of the Almighty, the Lord of heaven and earth, to whom belongs all things, came into the world, to His own, at Bethlehem, but His own received Him not; He found no place in the houses of men. Poorer than the poorest child was the Saviour when He came into the world. He Himself chose profound abasement, so as to suffer for us even then, so as to make satisfaction to His heavenly Father for our sins. What did Jesus Christ suffer? 4. *The Names Christ and Jesus.* The angel called the Saviour "Christ the Lord." Christ means "anointed." In the Old Law the prophets, kings and priests were anointed with oil. Christ is our Supreme Prophet, King and Priest. What does the word Christ mean? Why is Jesus called "the anointed"? The name Jesus is (a) a holy name; for it comes from God. Mary, the blessed Mother of God, so called her child. It has been written of this sacred name, that it is above all other names: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bend, that is in heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth." Because this name is so holy the Catholic Church has instituted a feast in its honor—the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, on the second Sunday after the Epiphany. The name Jesus is (b) a powerful name. Jesus Himself said, that in His name the devil would be driven out, and the sick healed. St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "Hell trembles when the name of Jesus is uttered." The name Jesus is (c) a sweet and consoling name, sweet and consoling to the sinner, for whom Jesus is the good and merciful Shepherd; sweet and consoling for the just, for them Jesus is a good friend and brother, a helper in need. (Holy Name Society.)

E. *Moral Application.*—As the name of Jesus is so holy, powerful, sweet and consoling a name, pronounce it always with greatest reverence and devotion, never irreverently. Avoid the grievous sin of misusing the holy name by swearing and cursing.

VI.—THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

A. *Preparation.*—According to the law, a Jewish mother was considered unclean for forty days after the birth of a son. After this time she was required to go to the Temple and offer a sacrifice of purification, a lamb and a dove, or, if she was poor, two doves. Mary being poor she brought the latter offering. Upon this occasion Jesus was presented to the Lord (God), offered up and released from the holy service. To explain the latter it is to be men-

tioned that according to the law every firstborn male child was considered to belong to the Lord, because He had spared the firstborn at the departure from Egypt. (cf. O. T., XXXIV.). The firstborn therefore became priests of God. When later the tribe of Levi alone was selected for the priesthood, the firstborn were released from the service of the Lord by a ransom in money, amounting in our currency to about \$3.00. Jesus was Mary's first-born and only child, and for this reason she had to take him to the Temple, there to present, offer up and ransom Him. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) Presentation of Jesus. (b) Simeon. (c) Anna.

C. Explanation.—(a) Jesus had to be taken to Jerusalem, to the Temple, which Zorobabel, after the return of the Jews from captivity, had erected, in the year 536 B. C., and which Herod had considerably enlarged. (b) As Joseph and Mary brought the child into the Temple, Simeon was there. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that this child was the Redeemer. He took Him in his arms, and cried out: "Now, O Lord, dismiss thy servant in peace, according to thy word"—according to thy promise; "I can die in peace because my eyes have seen thy salvation," which thou hast prepared for all people in this child (the Redeemer). "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles," who will be brought by the Redeemer out of the darkness of unbelief (idolatry) to the knowledge of the true faith. "To the glory of the people of Israel," from whom the Redeemer descended. Mary and Joseph wondered (a) that Simeon knew all this, and (b) that the Redeemer had come for the heathen too. "Simeon blessed them"; he congratulated them about their child. He said to Mary: "Behold this child," namely, Jesus, "is set for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many"—for the ruin, the damnation of those who will not believe in Him; for the resurrection, the eternal happiness of those who will believe in Him. "And for a sign which shall be contradicted"; that means the Redeemer would be contradicted by the Jews in their hatred and blindness, and His words would not be believed. "And thy own soul, a sword shall pierce," meaning that Mary would undergo much suffering on account of her son, and this would hurt her soul, as a sword hurts the body. (c) At that same hour, the prophetess Anna came into the Temple, while Mary and Joseph were there with the divine infant. She praised the Lord, who had enlightened her by the Holy Spirit to recognize the child. She proclaimed Him, namely of the Lord, to all those who awaited with desire the redemption of Israel, telling them that this child was the expected Redeemer.

D. Commentary.—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His faithfulness. When the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt the Temple, God revealed to them, through the prophet Aggeus: "Yet one little while, and the desired of all nations shall come: and the glory of this last house shall be more than the first." This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was presented in the Temple. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"?

(b) His goodness. God had revealed to Simeon that he should not die until he had seen the Redeemer. Through this God showed His love for Simeon, who had a great desire for the Redeemer. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is good"? 2. *Mary's Virtues.* (a) Her profound humility. Although Mary was the purest virgin and mother, and did not need an offering of purification, yet she subjected herself to the requirements of the law, from humility. She showed thus: (b) Her obedience to the law which God had given through Moses. 3. *The Purification.* On the 2d of February the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This festival bears three names. It is called (a) Feast of the Presentation of Jesus, because Mary presented Jesus to the Lord, and offered Him up. (Fourth Joyful Mystery of the holy rosary.) (b) The Purification, because Mary upon this occasion brought the offering prescribed for purification. (c) "Candlemas Day," because on this day candles are blessed, in commemoration of Simeon's words at the presentation in the Temple, "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles."

E. Moral Application.—May you resemble the blessed Mother of God in her obedience to the commandments of God. Repent of all transgressions of the commandments of which you have hitherto been guilty, and make a firm resolve to observe the commandments for the future most faithfully. Then, like Simeon, you will one day be able to depart this world in peace.

VII.—ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

A. Preparation.—Not long after the birth of Jesus three Magi, or wise men, journeyed from a far country to Jerusalem in order to worship the Saviour. Not finding Him there they went to Bethlehem. We shall learn more about this in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) The Magi before Herod. (b) The Magi in Bethlehem.

C. Explanation.—(a) The three Magi, also called kings, because they were probably of royal descent. Their names were: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. They came from the Orient (east); that means the country situated east of Palestine. In all probability they were from Babylon, where the study of the stars, or astrology, interested a great many, so, too, the three Magi. (b) New, uncommon star attracted their attention. Doubtless, too, they knew of Balaam's prophecy, he having come from that country. "A

star shall arise out of Jacob," etc. (O. T., XLVI.) By divine inspiration it was made plain to them that this marvelous sign was that star of Balaam's, which betokened the coming of the Redeemer, whom the Magi greatly desired to see. Hence they named the star "His (the Redeemer's) star." They went to Jerusalem because they believed they would find the Redeemer in the capital of Judea, or at least learn there of His whereabouts. They called Him "king of the Jews," because of Balaam's prophecy a sceptre was mentioned; they made inquiries as to where they could find Him, because they wished to adore Him—the new-born king of the Jews. When Herod heard of this he was much troubled, because he feared that he was to be dethroned. The people of Jerusalem also were disturbed, fearing fresh cruelties on the part of Herod, who would leave not a stone unturned to hold the throne. So Herod called together the high priests, in order to find out where Christ was to be born. Formerly there had been only *one* high priest, who would remain invested with this office till his death. Since the Romans ruled over Judea high priests were appointed and removed by them at pleasure, so that, besides the one in office, there were many others who had held the office and were still called high priests. "Learned in Scriptures"; that means men who knew the Sacred Scriptures thoroughly, and interpreted them to the people. "Micheas" (cf. N. T. V.) had prophesied that Bethlehem would not be "the least amongst the cities of Juda"; on the contrary, it was to be the most important. Princely city—chief city. The Redeemer was to rule over His people, the people of God, and He was to establish a great spiritual kingdom. Herod sent for the Magi privately, because he had determined upon putting the child to death; he did not want this known, so he asked the Magi questions, without their suspecting his purpose. He made minute inquiries of them as to the exact time of the star's appearance (in order that he might know how old the Infant was), pretending that he, too, wished to adore Him. Herod was as cunning as he was cruel. (b) The Magi had hardly left Jerusalem when "the star went before them again;" it had disappeared for a time, and this fact had caused the Magi to make inquiries in Jerusalem. God so arranged this in order that Jerusalem might hear that the Redeemer was born. At last the star stood over the place, that means over the stable, where the Saviour was. Upon entering the Magi found the infant, and falling down they adored Him, because they had been enlightened that this child was the divine Redeemer. They offered the gifts which they had brought with them. There was "gold," indicating that the Redeemer was a king; "frankincense," because He was God; and "myrrh" (a bitter herb, used in embalming the dead), because He was man. They departed after that to go back to Herod and to tell him where the infant was to be found, but God revealed to the Magi the cruel intentions of Herod, and they returned by another way into their own country.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Attributes of God.* (a) His faithfulness. God had made the announcement through His prophet Micheas, in the year 725 B. C., that the Redeemer would be born at Bethlehem. This now happened. God kept His word. What do we say of God

for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is faithful"? (b) His omniscience. God told the Magi not to return to Herod, because He knew the intentions of the cruel and crafty king. What do we say of God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? 2. *The Effects of Grace.* The three Magi were persons favored by God. From among the many pagans they were selected to behold and to adore the Redeemer. They co-operated faithfully with the grace granted them. When God had enlightened them and had revealed to them that the Saviour was born, they went upon their way immediately, to find and to adore the Redeemer. They were not deterred by the hardships of a long journey, and when they heard in Jerusalem that the Redeemer's birth was not known there, they did not turn back, but continued their journey until they found the One they sought. They were therefore faithful in co-operating with grace. The Divine Redeemer rewarded them abundantly for this. For their gold He bestowed His love upon them, for their incense He gave them fervent devotion in prayer, and for the myrrh patience in suffering. After the Lord's ascension, tradition tells us, they were baptized by the apostle Thomas. In reward for their faithful co-operation with grace they attained the grace of salvation. 3. *Feast of the Three Kings.* To commemorate the adoration of the Lord by the Magi, the Church celebrates, on the 6th of January, thirteen days after Christmas, the Feast of the Epiphany, because the Redeemer on this day made Himself known to the pagans as well.

E. *Moral Application.*—Co-operate faithfully with God's grace. Accomplish, with His assistance, the good you have to do; avoid the evil, of which grace warns you, then you also will obtain eternal salvation.

VIII.—THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT AND RETURN.

A. *Preparation.*—God revealed the cruel intentions of Herod to Joseph, and ordered him to flee with the child into Egypt, so as to save Him from death. After Herod's death Joseph, at God's command, returned to Judea. The following story will explain this to us.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Flight of the Holy Family. (b) Slaughter of the infants. (c) Return of the Holy Family.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) At the time of the Magi's departure for home an angel appeared to Joseph in his dream, bidding him to flee into Egypt.

There the child would be safe from Herod, who had no jurisdiction there. And they started on the journey. It was a distance of some hundreds of miles; the journey was a difficult one because their path led through the desert; it was also perilous, on account of robbers and wild animals. In Egypt the Holy Family dwelt in the province of Gessen. There is a pious legend saying that the pagan idols of Egypt fell from their pedestals when the Holy Family entered the country. (b) "All the male children of two years of age and under were slain." Herod had inquired of the Magi the time when the star had appeared to them, so that he might be able to tell as nearly as possible the child's age. He concluded that it could not be over two years of age, and ordered the "slaughter of the innocents," expecting that the child Jesus would surely be of their number. (c) Not long afterward Herod died of a loathsome disease, the punishment for his crimes. Joseph was commanded by God to return to their country, to the town of Nazareth, in Galilee, west of Tabor.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Attributes of God.* (a) His goodness. God cared for the Holy Family, protected it from danger upon the long journey into Egypt, and conducted it safely back again to Judea. He permitted, it is true, that the babes of Bethlehem should lose their natural lives, but bestowed upon them life eternal. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? (b) His justice. The mothers of Bethlehem had previously refused the Mother of God to enter their homes. As a punishment, they suffered the loss of their children. The cruel Herod thought he had triumphed, supposing that, among the babes of Bethlehem, he had slain the Saviour. But well-deserved punishment soon overtook him. Stricken with an agonizing illness (just like Antiochus), he sank into the grave. What do we call God for this reason? What do you mean by saying "God is just"? 2. *The Guidance of Divine Providence.* According to the divine counsels Jesus was not to die as yet. Herod had designs upon His life, but divine Providence watched miraculously over this child. God ordered Joseph to flee with the child and His Mother into Egypt, that He might escape the murderous designs of Herod. After Herod's death, divine Providence led the Holy Family back to the country of the Jews: not, however, to Judea, which was governed over by the cruel Archelaus, but to Galilee, where the mild Antipas ruled, and where they were to dwell at Nazareth, a little despised town, where no one would expect to find the Redeemer. Thus the Infant Jesus was miraculously preserved; so also does God preserve us, and the whole universe, ordering and disposing everything. What do you mean by saying "God preserves the world"—"God rules the world"? What do we call the divine so-

licitude in preserving and ruling the world? 3. *Joseph's Virtues and His Exalted Dignity.* Like the Mother of God, Joseph was a model of virtue. He was adorned with (a) chastity. For this reason he was chosen to be the spouse of the most pure Virgin; (b) a firm and lively faith in the divine Infant and His Mother; (c) a cheerful and prompt obedience; he arose at once (even at night) to flee with the child and His Mother; (d) confidence in God and resignation to the divine will; without fear or hesitation he undertook the long and perilous journey into a strange country; (e) diligence and industry, to supply the necessities of life for himself, Mary and Jesus. Joseph's exalted dignity is great indeed. In preference to many others, he was chosen to be the foster-father of the Lord. God intrusted to him that which was most precious—His beloved Son. This was a great mark of distinction for Joseph. For this reason the Church specially venerates Joseph. In his honor she celebrates the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19. And as Jesus was once confided to his care, the Church has placed herself likewise under his protection, and for this purpose celebrates annually the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, on the third Sunday after Easter. 4. *The Feast of the Holy Innocents.* In commemoration of the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem, the Church appointed the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the 28th of December. At Mass, on this feast, the priest wears vestments of violet color (the color of penance) because these children were unbaptized, therefore burdened with original sin, when they suffered martyrdom, which, however, as a baptism of blood delivered them from original sin. What is baptism of blood?

E. *Moral Application.*—Have firm confidence in divine Providence; it will guide you safely through this life. Say daily, "Thy will be done," and do not murmur against God if things do not sometimes go your way.

IX.—JESUS AT THE AGE OF TWELVE IN THE TEMPLE.

A. *Preparation.*—For a few years we do not hear anything about the child Jesus at Nazareth. When the boy was 12 years old He visited, with His parents, the Temple at Jerusalem, in order to celebrate there the festival of Easter. The following story will treat of this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Loss of the child. (b) Finding Him again in the Temple. (c) The hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) They went to Jerusalem, namely, to the Temple. Every male Israelite, from the age of 12 upward was obliged to go to the Temple at Jerusalem three times a year, for the three chief festivals (Easter, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles). Like the other women of Israel, Mary was not obliged to attend; yet many of them went there from motives of zeal and piety. After the celebration was over (it lasted eight days), they returned home. Joseph and Mary, not seeing Jesus with them, supposed that He was with the rest of the travelers (namely, with acquaintances and relatives from Nazareth). At night-time, however, they sought Him, and not finding Him they were greatly troubled. They returned at once to Jerusalem, because their anxiety for their lost child gave them no rest. (b) After searching for three days, they found Jesus in the Temple, not in the sanctuary, for there no one except the priests might enter, but in the hall, where the law was taught and the Sacred Scriptures explained. Mary and Joseph were much astonished when they heard youthful Jesus answer the doctors with great wisdom for his age. They asked Him why He had remained behind in Jerusalem, causing them such anxiety and sorrow? And He said to them: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's?" The Saviour wished to imply thereby that He could not have acted differently, because it was His Father's will. "And Mary kept these words in her heart"—meaning she thought about them and compared them with what the prophets, the archangel Gabriel, the shepherds and Simeon had said about the Saviour. And thus the mystery of the Redemption became more comprehensible to her. (c) "And Jesus increased in wisdom, age and grace before God." This means that as He grew older He revealed more and more His wisdom and knowledge, so that it appeared as if, like any ordinary child of man, every year increased His knowledge. He grew in grace, and His words and works were more enlightened from year to year, so that people (the inhabitants of Nazareth) loved and esteemed Him.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus, True God and True Man.* Jesus Himself called God His Father: "Did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's?" Accordingly He is the Son of God, therefore true God. This is the first testimony of His divinity from His own lips. Mary called the boy Jesus "child"; Jesus increased in age like every other human being; therefore was true man as well. Who, then, is Jesus Christ? 2. *The Fourth Commandment.* Jesus faithfully observed the fourth commandment. His remaining behind at Jerusalem without the knowledge of His parents, and His answering Mary's question with the words, "Did you not know," etc.? appear at first glance like a violation of the fourth commandment. If we look more closely, however, His filial devotion to His parents appears in its most beautiful light. Jesus plainly made it clear that He would have spared His parents their anxiety and trouble if God had so willed it. He got up at once, left the

Temple, the place so dear to Him, and followed His parents to Nazareth, and was there subject to them (obedient) until His thirtieth year. Jesus, true God, obeyed His human parents. What does God command in the fourth commandment?¹ 3. *Jesus a Shining Example for the Young.* Little information is given us concerning the youth of the Lord, but still enough for us to perceive that Jesus was a model of what a good, upright child should be. He distinguished Himself by piety and zeal in good. He cheerfully accompanied His parents to the Pasch at Jerusalem, so as to honor and worship His heavenly Father in the Temple. He could not, as it were, bear to leave the Temple. Hence He remained there after His parents had left Jerusalem. So should the young possess true piety and zeal for good, and conscientiously and gladly visit the house of God, especially on Sundays and holydays. What does God command in the third commandment?² In the Temple Jesus sat among the doctors, listened to them and questioned and answered them. Following His example the young should be animated by a great desire to be instructed. How Jesus faithfully observed the fourth commandment has been shown above. If He, the Son of God, was subject and obedient to His parents, how much more should ordinary children respect their parents. Jesus increased in wisdom and grace before God and men. So, too, should the young endeavor to become proficient, and especially to make progress in the truths of the faith; then likewise will they increase in grace before God, that means they will become ever more pleasing to God and men; for when the young are pious they are good and modest and they thereby gain the good-will of all.—The Fifth Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

E. *Moral Application.*—Ask yourselves whether you have striven to attain the beautiful virtues which you so much admire in Jesus. Remember that as Christian children you are obliged to become ever more like Jesus, and that only then can you be pleasing to God.

REVIEW OF THE FIRST PART.

1. Short account of this period. 2. Which prophecies concerning the Messiah have been so far fulfilled? What is the conclusion? 3. Jesus true God and true man. 4. What did Jesus suffer for us already in His earliest youth? 5. Upon what occasions were mentioned and where are situated: (a) The mountains of Judea? (III.) (b) Nazareth? (II. and VIII.) (c) The desert of Judea? (IV.) (d) Bethlehem? (V.) (e) Jerusalem? (VI., VII. and IX.)

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS.

FROM THE BAPTISM BY JOHN TO THE FIRST EASTER FESTIVAL.

X.—JOHN THE BAPTIST, THE PRECURSOR OF JESUS.

A. Preparation.—In the thirtieth year of His age Jesus was to enter upon His public life. John therefore left the desert at God's command, and by preaching penance he was to prepare the people for Jesus. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) Appearance of John. (b) His rebuke to the Pharisees and Sadducees. (c) His sermon on penance. (d) His testimony for Christ.

C. Explanation.—(a) John preached the word of the Lord. He went into the country all about the Jordan, not far from the Dead Sea. "Do penance"; that means awaken contrition over your sins, confess them, and make a resolution of amendment. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"—namely, the Redemption, which the Saviour, descending from heaven, would bring with Him. John wore a garment of camel's hair, i. e., a long tunic reaching to the ankles, woven out of camel's hair; a leather girdle around the loins to hold it together; his food was locusts, dried or baked in the sun, and wild honey, meaning the honey of wild bees. (b) Pharisees and Sadducees (cf. O. T., XCIII.). John called them a brood of vipers because they were crafty and wicked like snakes. "Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come?" The Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized, but only for appearance sake, to be considered pious and holy; they imagined that this was sufficient to escape future punishment (damnation). "Bring forth fruit worthy of penance"—that is to say, do good, not for the sake of being praised by men (as formerly), but to render satisfaction to God for your sins. He tells them not to say, "We have Abraham for our father." The Pharisees imagined they would be saved because Abraham was their ancestor, because they belonged to the chosen people, and that on this account they need not do penance. "God can raise up children"; that means God can and will call other people, the pagans, for instance, to salvation, and make them, in a spiritual way, the children of Abraham. "For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees"—meaning mankind. Those who do not bring forth good fruit, namely, the man who will not do penance and do good works, "will be cast into the fire"—into eternal perdition. (c) "What ought we to do then," that we may not share the fate of the unfruitful trees? "Taxgatherer." These men collected the taxes, tithes, etc., for their masters, the Roman nobles, who had secured the privilege of the taxes from the state; they were for the most part heathen, and often overcharged the Jews, therefore much hated by them. The Roman soldiers were chiefly pagans; they often assisted the taxgatherers, and on such occasions were frequently guilty of deeds of violence. John

tells the soldiers to be content with their pay. (d) John is asked if he is the Redeemer who is ardently expected; whether he is Christ the Messiah? He says to them: "I am not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoes"—that means not worthy to be his servant or slave (slaves undid their master's shoes). "I indeed baptize you with water unto penance"—He (Jesus) shall baptize you "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," meaning the fire of the Holy Ghost. His graces which purify the soul, like metal is cleansed by fire.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *John's Lifework.* Already, at the announcement of John's birth, the angel Gabriel said that John would convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he would go forth in the spirit and the strength of Elias, to prepare a holy people unto the Lord. Zachary, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had said at his son's birth that he would prepare the way of the Lord, and lead His people to the knowledge of salvation. Consequently John's lifework consisted in this: (a) To call the Jewish people, by his example and his preaching, to penance, and thus prepare for the Redeemer, and (b) to give testimony of the same. Both of these works were accompanied by John. 2. *He Prepared the Jews for the Redeemer, by Exhorting them to do Penance.* (a) By his glorious example of virtue. John was a model of self-denial and mortification (food, clothing and sojourn in the desert), of obedience—he forsook his abode in the desert to which he had become attached, when God bade him go before the people and preach; of humility—this holy man did not consider himself worthy to be the servant or slave of the Messiah; (b) by his remarkable sermons, which brought to him the whole of Judea and even many heathens. He required of his hearers (1) Contrition and confession of sins: "Do penance." "They let themselves be baptized and confessed their sins." Why must we confess our sins in order to receive remission of the same? (2) Amendment of life. Above all things good works, justice and charity. "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none." "He that hath meat, let him do in like manner." "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you." "Do violence to no man." 3. *John Bore Testimony for the Redeemer*, who, according to his words, would be far more powerful and exalted than he was, so that he was not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoes. Christ therefore was to save and to condemn. God alone can do this. Therefore He must be God. (Second article of the creed.)

E. *Moral Application.*—The fact that the Pharisees were children of Abraham did not suffice for them to be saved, nor is it sufficient for our salvation to become, by Baptism, children of the Church of

God. It is required of us that we repent of our sins, confess them, and do good works, that we may be garnered as wheat into the heavenly barn. What does your conscience say in regard to this? Has your contrition been sincere and heartfelt? Was your confession valid? Your satisfaction and restitution complete?

XI.—JESUS IS BAPTIZED.

A. *Preparation*.—While John was preaching and baptizing at the Jordan, Jesus came one day to be baptized. We shall now hear about the baptism of Jesus and what occurred then.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Baptism of Jesus. (b) God's revelation.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) At the time when John preached and baptized at the Jordan Jesus was about thirty years old. As He approached John, the latter realized, by divine inspiration, that Jesus was the Redeemer. He stayed Him, as Jesus was about to descend into the water, saying, "I ought to be baptized by thee," namely, with the Holy Spirit, "and comest thou to me?" since thou art far greater and mightier than I am. And Jesus answered: "It becometh us to fulfill all justice," namely, Jesus and John; meaning it is God's will that I should be baptized, and whatever is God's will must be done. (b) After Jesus was baptized the heavens opened, and the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, descended upon Him. This means the Holy Ghost, for His appearance took the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven was heard—God the Father's—saying: "This"—Jesus of Nazareth—"is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Why did Jesus let John Baptize Him?* As God, it was surely not necessary for Jesus to be baptized. Yet He asked it of John (a) for His own sake: for after His baptism a voice sounded from heaven which announced, to the listening multitudes about John, that He was the Son of God and the Redeemer; (b) for John's sake: John had been assailed by the Pharisees on account of his baptizing. They disputed his right to baptize, because he was neither Christ nor Elias, nor one of the prophets. Jesus, by allowing John to baptize Him, desired to confirm before all John's authority to baptize; (c) for our sakes: Jesus was free from all sin, and He did not stand in need of baptism. When, however, He came to John, he went among the sinful men who needed baptism, and declared Himself willing to take upon Himself the sins of mankind, our sins included. The Fathers of the Church point out also that Jesus had Himself baptized by John that, by descending into the waters of the

Jordan, He might consecrate these and all other waters, and preordain them, as it were, for the Sacrament of Baptism; also to indicate, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in baptism. 2. *The Baptism of Jesus a Figure or Type of Our Own Baptism.* At Jesus' baptism the heavens opened, the Holy Ghost descended, and a voice from heaven spoke. The same happens, in a certain sense, at the Christian baptism. In this baptism man becomes a child of God, an heir of heaven; heaven is opened to him immediately. Through baptism man is made a temple of the Holy Ghost, who descends into the soul, and, by sanctifying grace, renders it pure and innocent as a dove. The baptized becomes a child of God, in whom God is well pleased. 3. *The Holy Trinity.* God did not reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament in order that the Israelites, surrounded as they were by idolatrous nations, should not misunderstand the mystery, and perhaps, instead of one God in Three Persons, worship three gods. Nevertheless, we find there indications of a Triune God. "The Spirit of God moved over the waters" (Gen. i. 2). "Let us make man to our image" (i. 26). This mystery was not entirely revealed until in the New Testament and for the first time at the baptism of Jesus. God the Father spoke from heaven, God the Son knelt on the bank of the Jordan, God the Holy Ghost hovered over Him. How many Persons are there in God? Is each one of these Persons God? Is there, then, only one God? What do we call this mystery of one God in Three Persons? 4. *The Heavenly Father's Testimony to the Divinity of Jesus.* God the Father spoke: "This (Jesus) is my beloved Son." He called Jesus of Nazareth His Son. Consequently Jesus is the Son of God, and truly God.

E. Moral Application.—By baptism you have become children of God, heirs of heaven, and a temple of the Holy Ghost. Have you thus far preserved baptismal grace and innocence and have you regarded your body as the temple of the Holy Ghost? If not, then endeavor to restore sanctifying grace to your soul by sincere penance, and avoid closing heaven against you by committing grievous sins.

XII.—JESUS IS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL.

A. Preparation.—Soon after His baptism Jesus withdrew into the desert, to prepare Himself, by fasting and prayer, for His public life. What took place there we shall learn in the following story.

B. Narration.—The threefold temptation of Jesus. The devil asked Jesus (a) that He should change stones into bread; (b) that He should throw Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple; (c) that He should kneel down and adore him.

C. Explanation.—(a) Jesus was led by the Spirit, meaning impelled by the Holy Ghost. He withdrew into the desert, to the northwest of Jericho. There the tempter, the devil, approached Him. Satan did not know as yet that Jesus of Nazareth was the Redeemer. At the baptism, however, he had heard the voice from heaven, and he suspected Jesus to be the Messiah. In order to convince himself, he tempted Him. "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." Jesus answered, "It is written," in Holy Scripture (Deut.), "man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—meaning man, for body and soul, not only needs corporal nourishment (bread), but spiritual as well, and as the spirit is the most precious part of man he ought to have a greater desire for spiritual food than for corporal. (b) The devil took Him up to the holy city (Jerusalem). The pinnacle of the Temple—edge of the roof. He tempts our Lord again, asking Him to cast Himself down. Jesus answered, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"—meaning thou shalt not endanger thyself unnecessarily, confiding in God's protection. (c) Then the devil took Him up on a high mountain, namely Mount Quarantania, from which there is a delightful view of the surrounding country. The devil showed Him the kingdoms of the world, with their beauty and magnificence, their wealth and glory, and said: "All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me." Just as Satan lied to Eve, so set he about to deceive the Saviour. He could not have given what he promised, as he was not Lord and owner of the world. "Then Jesus said to him," with anger, "Begone Satan! for it is written, the Lord thy God thou shalt adore and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left him at once, because he realized who Jesus was. Angels came and ministered to Him, they adored and brought Him food.

D. Commentary.—1. *Why did Jesus allow Himself to be Tempted?* Jesus being the Son of God and truly God He was perfectly holy and just, therefore without sin and evil inclinations; temptation to sin could only approach Him exteriorly through the devil. He allowed this to happen (a) so as to take upon Himself the combat with Satan from the very beginning of His public life, having come upon earth for this purpose; (b) as a second Adam (Christ the *spiritual* ancestor of the human race) by His victory over temptation to atone for the fall of the first Adam; (c) to encourage us and to give us an example of how we should act in temptation. 2. *Rules of Conduct in Temptation.* Jesus' conduct in temptation is very instructive. He prayed and fasted. So, too, must we pray and fast; that means prac-

tise mortification, if we desire to be victors over temptation. Jesus did not enter into a long discussion with the devil. He disposed of the matter quickly, with the word of God. So should we act in temptation, not dally and hesitate, but reject it promptly and decisively, our thoughts directed to God. 3. *Varieties of Temptations.* As the devil looked upon the fasting Saviour as a man only, he strove to excite the threefold evil desires that slumber in mankind. First of all he asked the Saviour to appease His hunger by changing the stones into bread. This was a temptation to please the palate. After that he asked Him to throw Himself from the roof of the Temple, promising that, according to the word of God, He would remain uninjured. How astonished the people would have been if Jesus had cast Himself down without receiving the slightest injury! The devil thus wanted to excite pride and vanity. Finally Satan showed Him the kingdoms of the universe, their magnificence and beauty, their wealth and glory. He brought them before the eyes of the Lord, hoping that the Lord, to gain such a prize, would fall down and worship him. This was to excite the lust of the eyes. These evil desires, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and pride, lie dormant in every being, and they are the cause and source of most temptations.

E. *Moral Application.*—As little as the Saviour voluntarily sought temptation, should we expose ourselves wilfully to it. "For those who love the danger shall perish in it." Should you be beset with temptation, combat it immediately and never forget God's presence.

XIII.—THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

A. *Preparation.*—When Jesus had gained victory over the tempter in the desert, He departed from there and went again to the Jordan, where John was still preaching and baptizing. John proclaimed Jesus again to all the people as the divine Redeemer. Thereupon Jesus selected His first pupils, or disciples, and repaired to Galilee. Of this we shall be told in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) John's second testimony for Christ. (b) The first disciples of Jesus: 1. Andrew, John and Simon; 2. Philip and Nathanael.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) John says to his listeners, pointing to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God," meaning the divine lamb of sacrifice, who by His death would wipe out the sins of mankind. "This is he, of whom I spoke to you" (cf. X., 3), who was to come after me, meaning who is to appear later

than I, "who is preferred before me." Being God He is from all eternity, therefore before John. (b) Jesus selects His pupils or disciples. It was customary among the Jews for a public teacher to gather about him pupils, or disciples, to instruct them in his teaching, and through them to spread abroad his teaching. The more disciples a teacher had, the more prominent he became. John, too, had disciples about him, whom he prepared for the Messiah, and intended to turn over to Him. "Where dwellest thou?" The disciples of John wished to discover where Jesus dwelt, that they might go to see Him and beg to be admitted among His disciples. Jesus invited them to join Him soon, whereupon both disciples followed, and spent that day with Him. They relate to Simon that "they have found the Messiah," whom Simon greatly desired to see. Christ tells Simon he will be called Peter, meaning rock. He receives this significant name because he is to be chosen as the foundation stone (rock) upon which Christ will build His Church. Philip was from Bethsaida, in Galilee, on the lake Genesareth and near Capharnaum, whence came also Peter and Andrew. Jesus said to him, "Follow me," as disciple. "Nathanael," from Cana in Galilee, a friend of Philip's. "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote"—meaning the promised Messiah. Nathanael asks Philip: "Can anything of good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael meant that the Redeemer would not come from little, despised Nazareth. Philip replies: "Come and see," convince yourself. Jesus saw Nathanael coming, and He said of him: "Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile"—no deception or hypocrisy, as in the Pharisees. Nathanael said to Him: "Whence knowest thou me?" And Jesus answered: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathanael realized thereby that Jesus was omniscient, and therefore God. Hence his exclamation, "Rabbi," etc. "King of Israel," namely, the promised Messiah. Jesus assured him that he will see greater things, miracles.

D. Commentary.—I. Jesus of Nazareth the Promised Redeemer.

(a) John called Jesus "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." John confirms by this that Jesus is the Lamb of Sacrifice, who by His death or sacrifice would redeem mankind from their sins, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Redeemer. Philip gives evidence of the same in saying to Nathanael: "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets have written; it is Jesus of Nazareth." (b) Jesus of Nazareth Son of God and truly God. Of Jesus, whom he had proclaimed to the people as the Redeemer from sin and guilt, John says: "I testify that he is the Son of God. Jesus Himself reveals that He is God by saying to Nathanael: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," revealing thereby a divine attribute (omniscience). Nathanael cries out joyfully: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God." Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Redeemer, is therefore the

Son of God and truly God. In which article of the creed do we make this profession of our faith? What does the second article of the creed teach us? 2. *Peter, the Rock of the Church.* The Saviour signified already, at the calling of Peter, what an important position he would one day occupy in the Church by changing his name, and giving him the significant one of "Peter," meaning rock. We shall hear later on why the Saviour gave this name to Peter. 3. *Sincerity.* Jesus commands Nathanael for being without guile, that is to say, without duplicity and hypocrisy, sincere therefore. Nathanael possessed, therefore, the virtue of sincerity, the opposite of which is hypocrisy, forbidden by the eighth commandment. When do we sin by hypocrisy?

E. *Moral Application.*—Be like Nathanael, without guile, sincere. If you pretend to be better than you are, you are a hypocrite, and you may perhaps deceive men, but never God.

XIV.—THE WEDDING AT CANA.

A. *Preparation.*—Jesus, with His disciples, attended a wedding in the little town of Cana, in Galilee. What transpired there we shall be told about in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Occasion of the miracle. (b) The miracle. (c) The working of the same.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Cana," to the northwest of Nazareth. "Then the mother of Jesus spoke." Mary had compassion on the bridal couple, who found themselves in no little embarrassment, for on account of their great poverty they could not procure more wine. Mary by her remark wished to ask her divine Son to help them in their need by working a miracle. "Woman, what is that to me and to thee?" a Hebraic form of address, which sounds to us somewhat harsh, containing, however, nothing in the least disrespectful. It means really: Mother, why do you ask this of me, when the hour to perform my first miracle has not yet come. The embarrassment was to become greater, in order that all guests should notice the lack of wine, and that therefore the miracle that Jesus was to work should be all the more manifest. Mary understood, by the words of her divine Son, that he would grant her request, therefore she said to the servants: "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." (b) There were six water jars standing there, according to custom. Those who came from outside washed their hands and feet before entering the rooms (O. T., LXXV.). Each jar contained three measures. Measure was about 36 quarts. "Chief steward," he who had charge of the distributing of food and drink. He asks the bridegroom why he had reserved the good wine until the last. The bridegroom and the attendants explained to the chief steward whence the good wine came, and thus Jesus' first miracle was soon

made known to all. (c) Jesus manifests His glory, His divinity, and His disciples believed in Him more firmly than before.

D. Commentary.—1. *Intention and Purpose of the Miracle.* The water poured into those six vessels became all at once wine. Was this something natural? Can water become wine of itself? Never. Water remains water; you may keep it for years, it will never be wine. The changing of the water into wine can therefore not be explained by natural causes or powers. Who, then, accomplished this extraordinary act? Jesus, by reason of His divine omnipotence. Extraordinary acts of this kind which can not be executed by natural forces, but only by God's omnipotence, we call miracles. What, then, are miracles? Jesus in His first miracle intended three special purposes: (a) He wished thereby to reveal His divinity to those present and to impel them to believe in Him as the divine Messiah; also to strengthen the faith of His disciples who believed in Him already. (b) He desired to come to the assistance of the poor bridal party by putting an end to their embarrassment. (c) He wished to teach us that we too should assist our fellow men to the best of our ability.

2. *The Power of the Mother of God.* Jesus worked His first miracle at His mother's request. Although the hour was not yet come for Him to work miracles, still he granted Mary's petition—a powerful incentive for us to turn confidently to Mary in the necessities of body and soul, since her intercession with God avails so much. What prayer do we usually say after the "Our Father"?

E. Moral Application.—As Mary is such a kind and powerful helper in need, venerate her fervently, and never neglect, especially in time of temptation, to invoke her protection and assistance. (Prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin.)

REVIEW OF THE TIME OF JESUS' PUBLIC LIFE AND ACTIVITY UP TO THE FIRST EASTER FESTIVAL.

1. Short account of this period. John's work of preparation. Baptism of Jesus. Jesus in the desert. The first disciples of Jesus. Jesus in Cana. 2. Testimony to Jesus' divinity. (a) Testimony of John (X., XIII.). (b) Testimony of God the Father (XIII.). (c) Jesus' own testimony (XIII., XIV.). (d) Nathanael's testimony (XIII.). 3. Jesus of Nazareth the promised Redeemer (XIII.). 4. Upon what occasion are mentioned and where are situated: (a) The desert and the mountain Quarantania? (XII.) (b) Bethsaida? (XIII.) (c) Cana? (XIII., XIV.).

FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND EASTER FESTIVAL.

XV.—JESUS DRIVES THE SELLERS FROM THE TEMPLE.

A. *Preparation*.—After the miracle which Jesus worked at the marriage at Cana, He went to Capharnaum, and from there to Jerusalem, to celebrate the festival of Easter in the Temple. What took place there we shall learn in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Driving out the sellers and money changers.
(b) Jesus alludes to His resurrection.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) For the maintenance of the Temple a temple tax was imposed, which was to be paid in Jewish money. Since for the Easter festival (Pasch) the Israelites living outside the boundaries came to Jerusalem, bringing foreign money with them, money changers took advantage of this by taking up position in the Temple to change foreign money into Jewish coin at a high rate of interest. Carrying on this business in God's sanctuary was a desecration of that sacred place. "There were, too, those that sold doves." Jesus did not drive them out with a scourge, but He asked them to leave, for their business was less objectionable and they did not cheat. For this reason they were treated more gently than the others. "Take these things hence," namely, the dove cages. "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," a passage from Ps. lxxviii. 10, which treats of the Messiah and of His great zeal for the house of God. The disciples were hereby again strengthened in their belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah. (b) "The Jews," meaning the priests and elders, saw in Jesus' proceeding against the desecraters of the Temple an infringement of their rights; the traffic had existed with their approval. They asked Jesus, therefore: "What sign dost thou show us, seeing thou doest these things?" meaning the Temple market is maintained with our approval and you must prove to us that you have authority from God to drive out the buyers and sellers who were permitted by us to carry on their business here. Jesus answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," thereby indicating the future miracle of the Resurrection. He did not work a miracle before their eyes, because He foresaw that it would be of no avail with them. "Six and forty years was this temple in building." They had worked that length of time on the erection of the Temple. Jesus referred to the temple of His body; He designated His body as a temple.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God and True God*. Jesus called the Temple His Father's house. Consequently God is His Father, therefore He is the Son of God. The Lord proved His divinity also (a) by driving out the buyers and sellers, who

obeyed Him unresistingly—they did not return in wrath, but were restrained by His omnipotence; (b) by the prediction of His resurrection, whereby He reveals a divine attribute, omniscience. 2. *The Christian's Body a Living Temple of God.* The Saviour referred to His body as a temple. And so it was. In this body the fulness of divinity dwelt bodily. Our body likewise is a temple of God. In holy Baptism it was consecrated to be a living temple of God, the Holy Spirit took up His abode in it. For this reason the apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I. Cor. iii. 16). "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." Furthermore, Christ sanctifies our bodies and takes up His abode in the same, as often as He comes to us in holy Communion. Rightly, therefore, is the Christian's body called a temple of God, which must not be desecrated or violated by grievous sin, particularly not by impurity. How long does the Holy Spirit remain in the soul?

E. *Moral Application.*—Be careful to avoid desecrating or violating your body, this living temple of God, by misusing it, especially by unchaste acts. According to the words of the apostle, God will destroy those who violate their bodies, He will "damn them eternally."

XVI.—NICODEMUS WITH JESUS.

A. *Preparation.*—While Jesus sojourned and preached in Galilee, there came to Him at night a ruler of the Jews from Jerusalem, named Nicodemus. The following story treats of this.

B. *Narration.*—Instruction of Nicodemus (a) about baptism, (b) about faith.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Nicodemus was a member of the high court of justice of the Jews. "At night," for fear of being seen by the Jews. "As thou art a teacher from God," it follows that Nicodemus considered Jesus to be only a teacher sent by God, or a prophet, and not the Son of God. As Jesus knew, however, that Nicodemus had come with the good intention of learning more about the kingdom of God, as announced by Him, and of becoming a member of it, He made known to him immediately the first and most necessary condition to enter into the kingdom of God in these words: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again" (newly born, changed spiritually, becoming another man) "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus wished to say, into the kingdom of God upon earth—into the Church—and in the next life—into heaven; it is not sufficient to be a descendant of Abraham, but you must first of all become another man, changed spiritually—regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit (in Holy Baptism). Nicodemus did not understand the Lord, as his subsequent questions proved. (b) “Son of man.” Thus did Jesus call Himself, because He is truly man. “Shall be lifted up,” namely, upon the cross. “Whosoever believeth in him shall have eternal life.” Jesus thereby initiated Nicodemus into His work of redemption. Like all Jews, Nicodemus supposed that the Messias would establish a great kingdom and restore the glory and splendor of the Jewish nation. In order to remove this erroneous impression from the mind of Nicodemus, Jesus explained to him that He would one day be lifted up on the cross, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, and that all those who would believe in the crucified Messias would be ransomed from their sins, and receive the life of the soul alike to those who looked up at the brazen serpent with faith and confidence, and were healed of the fatal bite of snakes, and thus recovered the health of their bodies. “God gave his only begotten Son.” Herewith Jesus instructed Nicodemus concerning His divinity, in which the latter did not yet believe. “That the world may be saved by him”—the Messias came not merely for the Jews, but for the whole world; “he that believeth in him,” meaning the Son of God, “will not be judged”—that is to say damned. But he that doth not believe in Him is already judged, because through his own culpable unbelief he condemns himself.

D. *Commentary.*—Nicodemus came to Jesus because he desired ardently to become a member of the kingdom of heaven, as preached by Jesus. Thereupon Jesus instructed him in the most important truths of His doctrine, which at the same time are the first dogmas of Christianity. These are: 1. *The Necessity of Baptism.* “Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit,” meaning whosoever is not baptized has no part in the kingdom of God. Only through Baptism does man become a child of God and heir of heaven. Baptism accordingly is the first and most necessary Sacrament. Why is Baptism the first Sacrament? Why is it the most necessary? 2. *The Holy Trinity.* Prove by the words of Jesus that there is a Triune God (cf. XI). 3. *Jesus of Nazareth True God and True Man.* Jesus called Himself the “Son of God” or the “Son of man.” What may we conclude from this? (cf. XIII.). 4. *The Incarnation of the Son of God, Aim and Motive of the Same.* Jesus revealed to Nicodemus that the only begotten Son of God had come into the world; that means had become man. What does the third article of the creed chiefly teach us? What do we call this mystery? What, then, do we believe concerning Jesus Christ by believing in the mystery of the Incarnation? Jesus revealed to Nicodemus also the pur-

pose of His incarnation, which, according to His words, consisted in redeeming mankind from guilt and sin through His bitter Passion and death upon the cross. Why did the Son of God become man? Jesus referred likewise to the motive for the incarnation of the Son of God with the words: "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." The goodness and love of God, therefore, is the motive for the incarnation of the Son of God. What do you mean by saying "God is good"? What is the greatest proof of divine love and goodness? 5. *Necessity of Faith.* Jesus declared unqualifiedly the necessity of faith by the words: "Whosoever believeth in him," etc., and "whosoever believeth not in him," etc. Is faith necessary for salvation? Do all creeds lead to salvation?

E. *Moral Application.*—Thank God for the grace of giving you the true faith, and show yourself worthy of this grace by faithfully obeying its teachings. Then your faith will surely save you.

XVII.—JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

A. *Preparation.*—While Jesus was preaching in Judea John was thrown into prison by Herod, and as they were laying snares for Jesus, too, He left Judea and betook Himself to Galilee. On the way there He passed through the province of Samaria, and stopped at a town named Sichar, where He entered into conversation with a Samaritan woman. The following story will tell us about this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Jesus at Jacob's well. (b) His discourse with the woman of Samaria: 1. Promise of the living water; 2. Instruction concerning the true worship of God and revelation of the Messias. (c) Return of the disciples and conversion of many Samaritans.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) John was thrown into prison by Herod Antipas (cf. O. T., XXXIII.). John had been accused by the Pharisees, who were envious of his success as a preacher, and was held captive by Herod. "Sichar," where the Lord appeared to Abraham (cf. O. T., XI.). It was about the sixth hour, that is to say about noon, because the Jews began the first hour at what is six o'clock with us. (b) "How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink?" The Lord's request appeared strange to the Samaritan woman, because the Jews considered the Samaritans as unclean, and avoided all intercourse with them. Jesus answered: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Jesus referred to His grace and teaching, which appease the hunger and thirst after justice.

The woman did not understand the Lord, as proved by her words: "Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw," etc. The Samaritan woman understood, by living water, the water of the well. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob," that thou canst give a better water than he gave us? The Saviour explained to her then that not natural but supernatural water is understood by "living water." "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw." The woman, therefore, did not yet understand the Lord; she was thinking all the time of a natural water, the possession of which would do away forever with the trouble and hardship of drawing water. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," meaning a man enlightened by God, "because thou knowest my past life." This was unpleasant for the sinful woman, and she quickly changed the conversation. "Our fathers adored on this mountain Garizim," near Sichar. "Woman, the hour cometh," etc. With these words the Saviour foretold that in the time of the New Law God will be worshipped in all places. "The Father shall be adored in spirit and in truth," meaning devoutly worshipped in the true sacrifice of the New Law, in contrast to the lip devotion of the Jews and the prefigurative sacrifices of the Old Law. Although the woman did not comprehend the deeper meaning of these words, she understood that the Lord here spoke of a new time that was to begin with the Messias. She hoped to have a complete explanation given her concerning Him, hence the answer, "I know that the Messias cometh." This was followed by the Lord's revelation. (c) The disciples returned with food. The woman left her water jar standing, in joyful wonder at that which had come to pass. "Is not he the Christ?" With these words the woman, who had already belief in Christ, desired to induce her fellow citizens to go out to Christ. Jesus tells His disciples that He "hath food to eat which they know not of." Jesus remained two days because the inhabitants of Sichar desired salvation. And they said to the woman: "We ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world"; they were convinced.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Jesus True God and the Promised Messias.*

Jesus knew the sinful past of the woman of Samaria, and reveals thereby a divine attribute, omniscience; consequently His divinity. How do we know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is truly God? Jesus called Himself Messias—Christ. What does Christ mean? 2. *The "Living Water,"* which Jesus promised the Samaritan woman, is His grace and doctrine, which, if accepted by men, leads them to eternal life, where the hunger and thirst of the soul will be amply appeased. What do we understand by divine grace? What is heaven? 3. *The Adoration of God in Spirit and in Truth.* The Jews were held by law to offer sacrifice to the Lord nowhere else but in the Temple at Jerusalem, while the Samaritans claimed that Mount Garizim had been chosen and destined by God as the place of sacrifice. The Samaritans submitted this mooted question to the

Lord, and asked Him to decide which party was right. When Jesus replied, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father," it is evident that the Lord meant the adoration of God through the universal offering of sacrifice. Jesus points here to the time of the New Law, in which God would be worshipped by a new sacrifice that was confined neither to Jerusalem nor to Mount Garizim, but offered up in all places, in spirit and in truth, a contrast to the Jews' lip devotion and to the merely prefigurative sacrifices of the Old Law. In what does sacrifice consist? Have there been sacrifices at all times? The sacrifices of the Old Law were only types or figures of the truth, namely, of the actual sacrifice by which God desired to be worshipped and adored. Why have the sacrifices of the Old Law ceased to exist? The perpetual sacrifice of the New Law is the holy sacrifice of the Mass, to which Jesus alluded in his words to the woman of Samaria, which was to be offered up in all parts of the world according to the words of the prophet Malachias. What is the holy sacrifice of the Mass?" 4. *God is a Spirit.* Jesus Himself said: "God is a spirit, and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth." What is God? Why do we call God a spirit?"

E. *Moral Application.*—How do you assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass? Do you only worship God with your lips, beset with distractions, so that your spirit takes no part in it? Resolve that from this day on you will assist at holy Mass devoutly.

XVIII.—JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF NAZARETH.

A. *Preparation.*—After the Saviour had preached for two days at Sichar, and had converted many, He took the road to Galilee, and reaching Nazareth, He appeared at the synagogue, the house of prayer of the Jews. We shall hear about this in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Jesus' appearance in the synagogue and His revealing that He is the Messiah. (b) Unbelief and the attempt to kill of the Nazarenes.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Gospel of the kingdom of God; that means the glad tidings of the (spiritual) kingdom of the Church which the Redeemer wished to establish upon earth. Jesus had lived in Nazareth with His foster-father and His mother until He entered upon His public life; it was His native city.

He entered the synagogue, by which is understood a house of prayer, where the Jews meet on the Sabbath to pray, and where the Scriptures were read to them. The book of Isaías was given to Him by an attendant of the synagogue, namely, a roll of parchment, for in those days the books were all written by hand, and the written leaves were rolled. Jesus read from the book: "He hath anointed me, and sent me" (this passage treats of the Messias) "to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to heal the contrite of heart," meaning to heal of their sins those who are contrite of heart. "To preach deliverance to the captives"—those taken captive by the devil through temptation to sin and vice. "To give sight to the blind"—the spiritually blind. "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—the year of grace of the Lord, in which the slaves of sin (as in the jubilee years the slaves) are to regain their freedom. "Day of reward"—day of judgment. Jesus then seated Himself, in order to preach about what had been read. "This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears." To what extent? Because He of whom the prophet spoke, the Messias, sat before them. (b) "Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country"—meaning he is not considered of much account. Jesus demonstrates to His fellow citizens that what happened to Him had also befallen the prophets. He found, notwithstanding, just as little credence with them as the prophets had. The people, getting angry, took Jesus to the brow of the hill, intending to cast Him down, but "He passed through the midst of them and went his way."

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Law of the Sabbath.* Jesus went into the synagogue, as was His custom on the Sabbath. The Saviour, from His youth up, conscientiously observed the third commandment. What does God require in the third commandment? 2. *Jesus of Nazareth True God and the Promised Redeemer.* Jesus let Himself be led by the incensed inhabitants of Nazareth to the brow of the mountain; there, however, He strode through their midst and went His way. No one was able to stop Him. The angry and incensed people became powerless. Jesus revealed thereby a divine attribute, omnipotence, and thus His divinity. Before the people of Nazareth Jesus bore witness that He was the promised Redeemer. "This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears." Jesus is therefore truly God and the Redeemer. We declare this to be our belief in the second article of the creed: "And in Jesus Christ," etc. What does this second article of the creed contain? How do we know that Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer? 3. *Resistance to Divine Grace.* The Saviour revealed Himself to the Nazarenes as the Messias. All were astonished at the gracious words with which He spoke of the kingdom of God. But they would not believe in Him. We have here a forceful example of resistance to divine grace. Can we resist grace?

E. *Moral Application*.—By continuing in sin you, too, resist divine grace. Be careful that you do not receive grace in vain. "Many are called, but few are chosen."

XIX.—JESUS TEACHES AND WORKS MIRACLES.

A. *Preparation*.—After Jesus had been shamefully treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, He left his native city and repaired to Capharnaum, where He preached and worked many miracles. We shall learn more of this in the following.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jesus in the synagogue at Capharnaum. (b) Jesus in Peter's house. (c) Healing the sick. (d) Work of Jesus in Galilee.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Capharnaum, on the northwest coast of the lake Genesareth; here Jesus dwelt in Peter's house. There happened to be a man possessed of an evil spirit; namely, by sinning continually this unfortunate man had gotten completely in the devil's power so that Satan was in him. This man cried aloud, compelled by the evil spirit: "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?": by making us leave men and re-enter hell? "Thou art the holy one of God—the Messiah." And fear came upon the people, a fear of God's omnipotence. (b) Peter's mother-in-law was lying very sick of fever. Jesus was asked to heal her. He commanded the fever to leave her, and she was cured immediately; arising she waited on them at the table. (c) As the sun was down He healed the sick. At sunset the Sabbath ended and then servile labor could be resumed. The carrying of the sick was considered by the Jews as servile work. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirits and would not let them speak, for Jesus preferred that men should come to the knowledge of His divinity by His teaching and deeds. (d) Setting out He came to a desert place in the mountains of Capharnaum. The time is accomplished: meaning the time of waiting for the Redeemer. Troubles—infirmities.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. Even the evil spirits testified to the divinity of Christ. "Thou art the Son of God," they cried aloud, while the multitudes were astonished and seized with fear. The numerous miraculous healings at Capharnaum and in the vicinity were so many proofs for the divinity of Jesus, because they all manifested the divine attribute of omnipotence. How do we therefore know that Jesus Christ is truly God? 2. *Jesus' Prayer*. The Saviour by His prayer has given us an example for the manner of our praying. He betook Himself to a solitary place, to be able to pray undisturbed, and with devotion He prayed in the early

morning. From this we should learn to begin our day's work with God, to sanctify it. When do we pray devoutly? When ought we to pray particularly? 3. *The Exorcism*. As the Saviour, in our story of to-day, delivered the unfortunate ones possessed by evil spirits, so does the Church even in our days occasionally make use of so-called exorcisms, whereby, in the name of Jesus, she commands the devil to relinquish his pernicious influence upon creatures and objects. The exorcisms most frequently employed are those used in the administration of holy Baptism.

E. *Moral Application*.—Never forget to begin the day with God, with prayer, and sanctify thus your entire day's work. Have you said your prayers this morning?

XX.—THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

A. *Preparation*.—In the days when the Lord was sojourning in Galilee, there was on one occasion a multitude of persons congregated about Him at Lake Genesareth, so that in order to be better seen and heard he boarded a ship, from which He spoke to them. We shall learn what took place in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Lord's sermon from the ship. (b) The miraculous draught of fishes. (c) Effect of this miracle.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Jesus preached the word of God"—every word that Jesus spoke was a divine word. "The fishermen were washing their nets," after having just returned from fishing. (b) "Launch out into the deep (meaning the open sea), and let down your nets for a draught." The first command applied to Peter alone; the following, "Throw out," etc., to all disciples. Peter answered: "Master, we have labored all the night." The night is more suited for fishing than the daytime; at night the fish seeking their food approach the shores, while in daytime they remain in the depth. "But at thy word I will let down the net." The net broke on account of the vast quantities of fish which they caught. They beckoned their partners to come and help them—James and John. (c) When Peter saw this he fell down, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Peter considered himself unworthy to remain near the Lord. Jesus said to Peter: "Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt be taking men." The Lord indicated to Peter his future occupation: to gain, by preaching and baptizing, the souls of men for the Church of Christ. "They left all things," namely, home and family, as well as their trades, "to follow Jesus," they remained continually with Him, which they had not done before.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Jesus of Nazareth True God*. The large draught of fishes was an undeniable miracle. The catch was made (a) by day, when it was more difficult to catch fish; (b) on the

high seas, where the fish are not likely to enter the fishermen's nets; (c) after having labored long in vain. Therefore the draught of fishes was a miracle. Jesus revealed again, by the divine attribute of omnipotence, His divinity. 2. *Aim and Signification of this Miracle.* (a) The Lord's disciples, who had until then occasionally returned to their respective callings, were by this miracle to be so confirmed in their faith in Jesus as the divine Redeemer that in future they would remain with Him. Furthermore, the Lord wished through this miracle to point out to Peter and to the other disciples their future vocation, catching men for the kingdom of Christ, the Church, meaning the gaining of souls. (b) Lake Genesareth is a figure or type of the world, the ship signifies the Church, the steersman Peter, the head of the Church the Pope; his partners, the assistants of the Pope, the bishops. The net is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The rents in the net, through which many fish were lost, are the heresies and dissensions in the Church, through which many souls are lost to the Church. As Jesus remained in Peter's ship, so in these days He is found in the Church, faithful to His promise: "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world." What, accordingly, is the Church to-day? 3. *The Good Intention.* The Lord's disciples had worked all night unsuccessfully, yet when they threw out the net, in the name of the Lord, they caught a great quantity of fish. See what a blessing rests upon the work that is executed in God's name, for the love and glory of God! Therefore let us always begin our work with prayer, and by a good intention assure ourselves of God's blessing. What is a good intention? How can we make a good intention?

E. *Moral Application.*—Since the divine blessing rests upon work which is done for His honor and glory, do not omit to make a good intention every morning, nor when undertaking an important work.

XXI.—THE MAN SICK OF PALSY.

A. *Preparation.*—After the miraculous draught of fishes, the Lord returned to Capharnaum, where He cured a man sick of the palsy. We shall learn about this now.

B. *Narration.*—The healing of the paralytic (a) of his sins, (b) of his sickness.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Palsy is a painful disease which attacks the limbs and cripples them so that the sufferer can not walk nor even stand. The man,

who was lying on a bed, could not be brought near to Jesus because of the crowds, which crowded the house and the entrance. In Oriental countries the roofs of houses are flat and steps lead up to them from the outside. They carried him up on the roof, made an opening by removing part of it, and let the sick man down before Jesus, who, upon seeing their faith, that of the sick man as well as of the bearers, said: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." He perceived their faith in their great effort to reach Him. (b) The scribes and Pharisees thought within themselves, saying: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But Jesus knew their thoughts and said: "Which is easier to say," etc. No doubt it is easier to say "thy sins are forgiven thee," because it would be difficult to prove the truth of these words. God only can forgive sins. In order to prove to the Pharisees that He was God, and that He therefore could forgive sin, Jesus performed the miracle whereby He made known His omnipotence.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus of Nazareth True God.* Jesus manifested His divinity in a threefold way: (a) He knew the penitent and contrite disposition of the paralytic, which made him deserving of the forgiveness of his sins; He knew also the wicked thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees. He revealed thereby again the divine attribute omniscience, and therefore His divinity. (b) By His word He made the paralytic whole, and proved thereby His omnipotence. (c) He forgave the sins of the sick man, which God alone is capable of doing. 2. *Jesus Heals the Paralytic, first in His Soul and then in His Body.* In this way the Saviour wished to show that the illness of the paralytic was a consequence of his sins; also that sin was the greater evil, far worse than the most painful sickness. Must we only fear grievous sins? Finally, the Lord wished therewith to teach us that the soul is far more precious than the body, and that for this reason we should be more solicitous for the welfare of our soul than of the body. Therein consists true Christian self-love. In what does Christian self-love consist? 3. *The Forgiveness of Sins.* Jesus remitted the paralytic's sins because He was God. Only God can forgive sins. The forgiveness of sins takes place, in the Catholic Church, in the Sacrament of Penance. There, it is true, a man, the priest, remits sins, but not by his own power and authority, but in virtue of the authority bestowed upon him by Christ; the priest is God's representative. What is the Sacrament of Penance? Does the priest really remit sins, or does he only declare that he remits them?

E. *Moral Application.*—Be solicitous, above all things, for the salvation of your soul. Upon this depends your eternal welfare. Avoid staining your soul by sin.

XXII.—CHOOSING THE APOSTLES.

A. *Preparation*.—After Jesus had healed the paralytic, He betook Himself to a mountain near Capharnaum to pray. He had a matter of importance in view of which we shall now hear.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Choosing and (b) naming the apostles.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "He called his disciples"—who remained near to Him. Their number had greatly increased during the public life of Jesus. Apostle: messenger, ambassador. The apostles were to remain with Jesus until His ascension, then they were to go forth to all parts of the world. (b) "Bartholomew, also called Nathanael"; Matthew, a former tax collector; James the less, so called to distinguish him from James the brother of John; Judas Thaddeus, the courageous; Simon the zealous, so called on account of his zeal for the Mosaic law and its observance; Judas Iscariot—he was from Carioth, a city of Judea. All other apostles were Galileans.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus' Prayer*. The Lord spent a whole night in prayer because He contemplated an act of extraordinary importance, the choosing of the apostles; those men who were to continue His work upon earth, and to carry His doctrine to all nations. Let us learn again from this that we should pray before every important undertaking, invoke the blessing of God upon our efforts. When should we pray specially? 2. *Vocation of the Apostles*. Let us return in spirit to the twelve chosen ones of the Lord! They all were simple, unlearned men, yet the Lord had destined them for the gigantic work of propagating His work upon earth, of proclaiming His doctrine to the different countries and peoples, and of winning souls for the kingdom of God, for the Church. In order to prepare them for this great work, the Lord kept them with Him constantly, instructed them, and especially prayed for them a great deal. Because the apostles spread the kingdom of God, the Church, throughout the universe, the true Church calls itself "apostolic." What did Jesus do after He had left the desert? 3. *Peter's Precedence*. We had occasion to remark, at the calling of Peter, that the Lord intended him for some special office, as He gave him so significant a name. At the "draught of fishes" the Lord again distinguished Peter by entering *his* ship, directing him to make the miraculous draught of fishes, and giving to *him* the promise: "From henceforth thou shalt be taking men." All this happened because Peter was to

be the head of the Church and the chief of the apostles. The story of to-day, taken from St. Luke (vi. 12), as well as other passages in the Gospels, prove that the apostles acknowledged Peter as their superior, that they always accorded to him the first place among themselves, although he was not the first called nor the oldest of the apostles.

E. *Moral Application*.—The successor of Peter is the Holy Father, the Pope in Rome, who governs the Church in Christ's stead. Endeavor to have great reverence and affection for the Holy Father, and remember to pray for him.

XXIII.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

A. *Preparation*.—Upon the same mountain where Jesus had just chosen the twelve apostles He delivered the so-called Sermon on the Mount, setting forth the most important principles of His doctrine. A vast multitude had gathered to listen to His word.

I. THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

B. *Narration*.—In the so-called eight beatitudes the Saviour declares blessed those who practise the virtues recommended in His sermon. He promises them the bliss of heaven, and upon earth a certain foretaste of celestial happiness.

C. *Explanation*.—"The poor in spirit"—those who are poor at heart. "The land," the promised kingdom or land of heaven. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," here and in heaven above. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice," meaning after virtue and perfection, "for they shall be filled"—here upon earth, by gaining a high degree of virtue and perfection, and in heaven, where their desire for God will be perfectly appeased. "They shall attain mercy," namely, after their death they will find a gentle, merciful Judge. "Peace-makers," meaning those who are always ready to make peace and to be reconciled. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake," meaning on account of their faith and virtue.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *The Poor in Spirit*. These are (a) the really poor, who bear their poverty with patience and resignation to the divine will, therefore cheerfully and without complaint; (b) the rich who do not set their hearts on temporal goods, but use them in doing good; (c) those who give their entire property to the poor and choose for themselves voluntary poverty; (d) the humble, who

consider themselves deficient in virtues and merits. As a reward for the renunciation of earthly possessions, the Saviour promises an incomparably higher, more beautiful and enduring possession, that of heaven. (Job, the apostles, religious orders.) 2. *The Meek*. By this are understood those who do not resent and get angry at contradictions and insult, but bear their crosses resignedly and patiently, and who willingly forgive their offenders. (Jesus, Stephen.) As God's elect they will one day possess the land, that is, heaven.

3. *Blessed are They that Mourn*. (a) Those who mourn over their own sins, and repent of them from their hearts. (Magdalen, Peter.) (b) Those who are sorrowful over the sins of others. (Elias.) The Saviour promises to the mourners that they shall be comforted; that is to say, God will prepare a great joy for them even in this world through the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and in the world beyond by eternal blessedness.

4. *Hunger and Thirst after Justice*. To hunger and thirst after justice is to have a great desire to become better and more perfect. (Mary, the sister of Martha.) "They shall be filled," meaning they will receive here, upon earth, ever more grace, and will eventually be admitted to the hosts of the glorified. What means must every Christian make use of, no matter what his calling, in order to attain perfection?

5. *The Merciful*. Those who, from motives of pure charity, take compassion on their fellow men in their corporal and spiritual ailments, and strive to help their neighbors in their corporal and spiritual needs. "They shall obtain mercy," meaning God will also have mercy upon them, and will gladly send them consolation and assistance. What are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? (Noe, Tobias, the good Samaritan.)

6. *Cleanness of Heart*. Here is understood the cleanness of the heart from impurity. The pure will be rewarded by seeing God in an especial way; they will receive the first places in heaven; "they will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth and sing a song," which no one besides themselves will be privileged to sing. What are we required to do by the sixth commandment? (Joseph, Susanna, Mary and Joseph.)

7. *The Peace-makers*. Those who are ever ready and willing to be at peace with their fellow men, and who for this reason gladly and readily give way, so as to avoid quarreling. They shall be called the children of God, namely, they will in a special way resemble God, who is a God of peace. (Abraham, David.)

8. *Persecution for Justice's Sake*. All those who, on account of their faith or of their virtues, patiently endure derision,

mockery, neglect, even martyrdom and death, they will one day be amply compensated by the possession of heavenly honor and blessedness. (Elias, Jeremias, Daniel, Eleazar, the Machabees, John the Baptist, Stephen, the Christian martyrs.)

E. *Moral Application.*—The eight beatitudes are the guide-posts of heaven. Walk on the way pointed out by them and you too will be "blessed." Do not be led astray by the world, which looks upon these virtues as childish or foolish. Remember that the world always has made, and always will make, war upon Christ. The time will come, however, when the children of the world will realize their awful mistake and their blindness. Then will be fulfilled in them the words of Holy Scripture: "These are they, whom we had sometime in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God." (Wis. v. 3-5.)

II. THE APOSTLES' VOCATION.

After Jesus had set forth in the eight beatitudes the general principles of the Christian life, He turned to His apostles and explained to them their future mission in the world.

Explanation.—"Salt of the earth"—the salt of mankind. If the salt has lost its flavor, with what shall it be salted?—meaning that there is no means to restore its properties to the salt that has become tasteless. "Light of the world," meaning men who illumine the world by their good example. "A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid"—on account of their exalted office they will be seen from everywhere. "Bushel," a large measure for grain. "That it may give light to all that are in the house"—the apostles were to give light to men by their virtuous lives. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see," and imitate.

Commentary.—*The Mission of the Apostles.* As salt flavors food and renders it palatable, preserving it at the same time from decomposition, so, too, the apostles, by preaching the Gospel and by dispensing grace, were to lead men to virtue and perfection, making them acceptable (pleasing) to God, and preserving them from the decomposition of sin and vice. However, as the teaching of the Gospel will not suffice to improve humanity without the power of good example, the Lord called His apostles the "light of the world," that was to light upon all men by good example also; He compared them to a city that is built upon a mountain, consequently

is seen by all. Thus the apostles, in their exalted position and dignity, as wardens of the faithful, attract all attention to themselves. Hence, it is their duty to enlighten all men, as with a brilliant light, by their virtue and good work, "that men may see your good works" and feel impelled to imitate the good example.

Moral Application.—In common with the apostles and their successors, every Christian has the important duty of being a light to his fellow men; that means to give light by his good example. Have you always set a good example to your brothers, sisters and fellow pupils? If by bad example you have taught them evil, then you have been a cause of scandal. Upon such Our Saviour has pronounced an awful fate and said: "It were better that such an one should have a millstone hung around his neck, and that he be sunk into the depth of the sea"!

III. TRUE JUSTICE.

After the Saviour had explained to the apostles their mission, He turned again to the people to explain the relation of the New Law to the Old Law. The observance of the New Law makes us truly just, namely, pleasing to God.

Explanation.—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets," namely their teaching. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," to make the law more perfect. "Unless your justice abounds more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who observed the law according to the letter only." In the New Law the Lord demands more, as He explains thoroughly in the following: "It was said to them of old," meaning to your ancestors, "whosoever shall kill, shall be guilty of the judgment," meaning condemned by the tribunal. Raca—good for nothing. "Guilty of the council," meaning, deserves to be brought before the high council. "Fool"—according to the Hebrew interpretation this word means a corrupt and degenerate man. "Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be guilty of hell-fire," that means deserves to be damned. By this Jesus wished to say: Not only is killing a grievous sin and deserving the punishment of hell, but anger as well, and the affronts caused by anger are great sins. If thy brother hath anything against thee, namely, in consequence of an offense, or grievance, "Let your speech be yea, yea, no, no: for whatsoever is more than these cometh from evil"; that is to say, levity in asserting by oath is sin. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," meaning to return in equal measure evil for evil. "Resist not evil" means offer not resistance. "If any man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," meaning suffer and endure patiently the wrong done to you. It hath been said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor"; for the Jews this had meant only the Jew! "Your Father, who is in heaven, maketh

his sun to rise upon the good and the bad." In the same way as God bestows benefits upon good and bad, so, too, should you. "Be ye therefore perfect"—strive to become more and more perfect.

Commentary.—1. *The Fifth Commandment.* While in the Old Law killing only was forbidden by the fifth commandment, in the New Law anger, hatred, derision and affronts are also forbidden. Does the fifth commandment 'only forbid the actual wicked deed against the life of our neighbor?' 2. *The Oath.* The divine Saviour says: "Thou shalt not swear." He does not mean thereby that the oath in and of itself is sinful. This supposition is denied by His own behavior before the high council, where He accepted the oath of the high priest. The Lord rather forbids the thoughtless and unnecessary swearing. What is swearing? When do we sin by swearing? 3. *Love of Our Neighbor.* The commandment to love our neighbor is considerably enlarged upon by the Lord. No one, not even our enemies, is to be excluded therefrom. On the contrary, in the New Law the Lord expressly commands: "Love your enemies." Whom, after God, should we love especially? When is our charity universal? Is it enough if we do not take revenge upon our enemies? Love for our enemies should move us to attribute the wrong done to us to ignorance, thoughtlessness, and temper, rather than to malice. There results from Christ's commandment to love our enemies the Christian duty of reconciliation. "If thy brother hath anything against thee," be reconciled to him, forgive him! Then you may hope that God will also forgive you. What do we ask for by the fifth petition of the "Our Father," "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us"? 4. *Christian Perfection.* In conclusion, Jesus exhorts us to perfection. It is the duty of man, created to the divine image, to strive for resemblance to God, to become perfect by the faithful and conscientious observance of the commandments. Is it sufficient for us to avoid only grievous sins and vices? In what does Christian perfection consist? What means must every Christian make use of to attain perfection?

Moral Application.—If you have the bad habit of swearing and reviling, take care to break that habit, for the Saviour has strictly forbidden it. If a curse word should escape you, say quickly, in expiation, "Praise be to Jesus Christ."

(1) 368.

(2) 347.

(3) 352.

(4) For explanation see "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism," by the Rev. A. Urban.

IV. THE GOOD INTENTION.

Jesus instructs the people what motives should induce them to do good, namely, not for the approbation of men, but solely in honor of God, to do His holy will for the love of God.

Explanation.—"When thou doest an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites," namely, as the Pharisees. "They have received their reward," inasmuch as they are praised by men, and therefore have no further reward to hope for. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," meaning keep your almsgiving hidden, in order that you may not become proud and conceited and thereby lose your heavenly reward. "And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad, for they disfigure their faces"—by going about sulky and morose, in a penitential garment, unwashed and unkempt, so that every one should see what a severe life they are leading.

Commentary.—1. *Attributes of God.* His omnipresence and omniscience. Jesus said of His heavenly Father that He is everywhere, even in the most secret places, and that he sees in secret; that He knows even the most secret thoughts of men. What attributes does God possess accordingly? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent—omniscient"? 2. *Good Works.* As we expect good fruit from a good tree, so likewise God demands of man, ennobled by His grace, good fruits or works, under pain of losing salvation. What kind of good works these are the Saviour teaches in this chapter of the Sermon on the Mount when He discourses of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What good works are specially recommended to us in Holy Writ?

Moral Application.—Avoid doing only good in order to be praised by your parents, teachers or fellow men! Strive rather to do everything for the love of God. Thus you will become rich in merits before God.

V. THE RIGHT PRAYER OF PETITION.

In the following chapter the Lord instructs us what we should ask of God.

Explanation.—"When you pray, speak not much" (cf. "The Sacrifice of Elias," O. T., LXVII.). "Your father knoweth what you stand in need of before you ask him." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—in heaven by the angels, who are continually doing the will of God. "On earth"—by mankind.

Commentary.—1. *Prayer.* Prayer is as necessary for the soul of man as the daily bread is for his body. Hence, the Saviour speaks in this chapter of prayer. Is prayer necessary for salvation? It is not the important thing in prayer to use many words. The divine Saviour also said that we should pray without ceasing. How is this to be understood? How do we pray always? The granting of prayer does not depend upon its length, but upon the upright spirit and the object. For this reason the Saviour has taught us a short prayer, the "Our Father," which contains all that is important for the Christian to ask for. He should ask in preference for spiritual things. Of all the seven petitions of the "Our Father" the fourth only, and that only moderately, asks for temporal things.

2. "*The Our Father.*" Explanation of the several petitions.¹

Moral Application.—Since the "Our Father" comes from the very lips of the Son of God, say this prayer with special devotion and reverence.

VI. REAL TREASURES AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

As the Christian should ask preferably for spiritual goods, he should also strive after these goods in preference, and thereby accumulate for himself real treasures and riches for heaven.

Explanation.—"Do not lay up treasures on earth"—temporal goods. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," through good works. "For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also," meaning thy heart is attached to thy treasures. "No man can serve two masters" who have entirely opposite commands. "Mammon"—money and property. "Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment?" If God has bestowed body and life upon you, He will also grant unto you food and clothing. Do not be over-solicitous and anxious! "Consider the lilies of the field." "O ye of little faith!"—pusillanimous. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice," aspire, first of all, to become just—children of God, "and all these things shall be added unto you"—the things necessary for your earthly existence.

Commentary.—1. *Heavenly Treasures.* We are not on this earth in order to acquire earthly goods, but to lay up for ourselves treasures for heaven and eternity. Earthly things are perishable. Thieves can steal them, rust and moth destroy them. And, after all, at our death, we must leave them all behind. Heavenly treasures, on the other hand, are imperishable and unalienable. We accumulate these by doing good works, performed in the state of grace and with a

(1) For explanation see "Teacher's Handbook to the Catechism," by the Rev. A. Urban.

good intention. What fruits does the righteous man bring forth?

2. *Confidence in God.* The good God is solicitous even for animals and plants, gives them their daily sustenance, and cares for their existence. If God takes care even of them, how much more solicitous will He be for man, who is a far more important and higher creature? For this reason no one ought to be too solicitous for that which is necessary for the preservation of earthly life in order that he may not be preoccupied with such earthly cares, and thus forget his eternal destiny. "Place thy confidence in God, He will not abandon thee"! 3. *Care for the Salvation of the Soul.* Man should have but one care upon earth—care for the salvation of his immortal soul. This is his first and most important task upon earth. Hence the Lord's exhortation, "Seek ye first," etc., meaning strive first of all to become children of God—virtuous men. The "kingdom of God and his justice"; we seek this if we hate and flee from sin, preserve sanctifying grace within us, and practise the virtues, especially those most suitable to our state of life. By a sensible solicitude for our salvation, we prepare for our eternal happiness and welfare, and give proof of Christian self-love. In what does Christian self-love consist?

Moral Application.—Be diligent in laying up treasures for eternity (examples). By doing this you will act wisely and well, and prove that you love yourself in a truly Christian way.

VII. MERCY AND CHARITABLE JUDGMENT.

After the divine Saviour had spoken on the love of God and Christian self-love (good intention, real treasures), He touched in the next chapter upon Christian charity, by mentioning a sin against the same, most frequently committed by men, yet nevertheless not fully realized in its hideousness and gravity, namely, the harsh judgment of our neighbor.

Explanation.—"Be merciful," namely, toward your neighbor. "Give to the poor." With what measure you have measured it shall be measured to you—you will be rewarded here upon earth with blessing and grace, in the hereafter with heavenly bliss. "Judge not (that means do not form an unfavorable opinion of your neighbor), "that you may not be judged"—be damned. "Why seest thou a mote in thy brothers eye" (that means the little failings of your neighbor), "and seest not a beam in thy own eye?"—your own great faults you do not see.

Commentary.—1. *Charity and its Qualities.* As God is good, loving and merciful, so, too, must we be good and loving and merciful toward one another. By this the Saviour will recognize His disciples and followers, if we love one another as He has loved and still loves us. Our love of our neighbor must be: (a) Sincere. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." When is our love sincere? (b) Unselfish. Not for the sake of earthly reward, to earn the praise and approbation of men, but wholly and solely on God's account, because he is so loving and merciful to us. "Be merciful as your Father is merciful." When is our charity unselfish? (c) Universal. We must not exclude even our enemies from our charity. "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven." When is our charity universal? 2. *Sins against Charity.* The divine Saviour warns us, at the same time, of those sins against charity most frequently committed. These are: (a) Detraction. Too easily man feels disposed to judge his neighbor, his words and actions, and to condemn him on account of his faults. Hence the warning, "Judge not, that you be not damned." By this sin man does great injury to his neighbor, but also to himself. For "with the same measure," etc. When do we sin by detraction? (b) Unjust suspicion and rash judgment. Even to suspect, without good cause, our neighbor of wrong-doing is a sin against charity, even if we do not communicate our suspicion to others. How do we sin by unjust suspicion and rash judgment? 3. *Mortal and Venial Sins.* The divine Saviour compares the faults and sins of men to "motes" and "beams." Hence it follows that sins are not all alike in grievousness, that there are small and great, mortal and venial sins. Are all sins equally grievous?

Moral Application.—Beware of rashly judging your neighbor. Never speak unnecessarily of the faults of others, but remember that you have faults yourself. If you live up to this precept, then you, too, will one day find a merciful and forbearing Judge.

VIII. THE NARROW GATE AND THE STRAIGHT PATH.

Few persons will understand the Saviour's demands and live according to them; to the greater part these demands will remain incomprehensible, and because they appear too hard many will give way to their desires and passions, and thus incur the peril of being lost. The Saviour warns us of this in the following chapter.

Explanation.—"Gate," "to ruin," "to hell," "those who enter thereby"—that means through the wide gate that leads to hell. "Which leadeth to life"—meaning to the everlasting life of the blessed.

Commentary.—Narrow and straight is the way that leads to eternal life, narrow and restricted by the commandments of God and of the Church. This way, as laid out by the commandments, is difficult, because it requires of man a great deal of self-control, mortification and deprivations of all kinds. For this reason few walk this path. The greater number prefer the comfortable and broad path, where freedom and license alone govern, where they can live according to their concupiscence and passions, and need not care whether their actions are pleasing to God. These persons will end miserably, for the broad path of sin and vice leads through the "broad gate" to eternal perdition. Those others, on the contrary, by their mortifications and deprivations, by their obedience to God's commandments, will enter through the narrow gate into everlasting life.

Moral Application.—Do not follow the majority of men, who walk upon the broad and comfortable path of sin! Walk rather with the smaller number of the good, upon the narrow and difficult path of the commandments of God and of the Church. Accustom yourself, now in your youth, to observe the commandments of God faithfully and conscientiously.

IX. THE WARNING AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS.

Because the many, walking upon the broad path of sin and vice, exercise a bad influence upon others by their wicked example, the divine Saviour warns us especially of them, as of false prophets.

Explanation.—"Beware of false prophets"—seducers—"who come to you in sheep's clothing," meaning pretending to be pious and virtuous. "Inwardly they are ravenous wolves," and as wolves destroy the life of sheep, so would these persons rob you of the spiritual life of the soul, sanctifying grace, and therewith the adoption and friendship of God and of heaven. "By their fruits you shall know them," namely, by their conversation and actions, by their works. "Lord, Lord"—that means not all those who speak of me as their Lord (God), who believe in me.

Commentary.—I. *False Prophets.* By these are understood (a) heretics, whose teachings are in opposition to the doctrine of the Church; (b) seducers, who lead others to sin against the commandments. They are ravenous wolves, which, as St. Paul declares, "do not spare the flock." They kill the souls and plunge them into

eternal perdition. When do we injure our neighbor in the life of his soul? What should particularly prevent us from giving scandal?

2. *Faith Alone Does Not Save Us.* Although faith is necessary to salvation, yet it is not *alone* sufficient. Christ expresses this plainly in the words, "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," meaning not every one who acknowledges me as his Lord (God), and therefore *believes* in me, "but he that doth the will of my Father," meaning that in order to be saved we must do God's will as it is expressed in the commandments, we must avoid evil, do good and live according to the faith. Our faith must therefore be living. When is our faith living?

Moral Application.—If you associate with companions whose conversation or actions are wicked and immodest, you had better reflect that your soul, if not yet dead to God, is imperiled and liable to lose the life of grace and heaven.

X. CONCLUDING EXHORTATION.

The glorious lessons which Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount He concluded with the following exhortation: "And every one," etc.:

Explanation.—"And every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them," lives accordingly. "And every one that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand"—and the house fell, because the flood of water washed away the sand upon which the house was built. "And great was the fall thereof"; that means it fell with a loud noise, and buried all inmates irretrievably beneath its ruins. Jesus was teaching them as one having authority; that is to say, as one having power over the hearts of men.

Commentary.—*Christian Prudence and Wisdom.* The Saviour compared the one who listens to His words and obeys them to "a wise man, who built his house upon a rock," meaning he who believes what Christ teaches and lives according to this faith is prudent and wise. The rain of temptations, the floods of life's vicissitudes, the storms of earthly sufferings will not shake him, for he rests upon the solid and immovable foundation of faith. How foolish, on the contrary, are those who, knowing and possessing the true faith, do not live in accordance with it! They have built their temporal and eternal happiness on sand, which has no firmness. They can not stand the immovable storms and trials of this life, still less the future judgment. In what does prudence consist?

Moral Application.—You often hear the words of Jesus in Sunday school and in sermons. Do you live in accordance with them? Make the resolution to mind what you hear in Sunday school and sermons, to do good and avoid evil, and render an account of yourself every night by examining your conscience. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James i. 22).

XXIV.—JESUS CURES A LEPER AND THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

A. *Preparation.*—After Jesus had finished His sermon, He arose, descended from the mountain, and took the road to Capharnaum. On the way He worked two great miracles, about which we shall now hear.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The cleansing of the leper. (b) The healing of the servant.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “Behold a leper coming adored him.” (Concerning leprosy, see O. T., XXX. and LXXVIII., D 2). “Lord, if thou wilt,” etc. The sufferer possessed a strong faith. “See thou tell no man,” etc.—be silent about this miraculous cure! “But go,” to Jerusalem (upon the mount of Olives, where those cured were examined by a priest) “and offer the gift (a lamb) as a testimony to them” that I (1) am not come to abolish the law, (2) have healed thee by a word only: “I will, be thou made clean,” therefore I am God. (b) The servant of a centurion, a heathen, was sick unto death. When the centurion heard of Jesus, he sent to Him the Jewish elders. He sent them because, being himself a heathen, he did not venture to present his request to Jesus in person. When Jesus approached the house the centurion met Him, saying: “Lord, I am not worthy, that thou, the holy one of Israel, should enter under my roof, but say the word and my servant shall be healed.” The heathen centurion was therefore so firmly convinced of the divinity of Jesus that he did not consider the presence of Jesus necessary for the healing of the stricken servant. “For I also am a man having under me soldiers”; that is to say, my subjects obey my word, although I am only a subordinate official. How much more, then, will thy word be obeyed who art subject to no one. When Jesus heard this He marveled, and said: “I have not found so great faith,” as the centurion's, “even in Israel”—among the Israelites, or Jews. “And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven”; that means, they will attain heavenly bliss, here compared to a great banquet. “But the children of the kingdom,” namely, the Jews, “shall be cast out into exterior darkness,” that of hell, on account of their unbelief. “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” because of the terrible pains and torments, and because of their fury at being damned.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus True God.* By the two great mira-

cles which this story relates Jesus proves most positively that He is true God. He cleansed the leper by the words: "I will, be thou made clean." He did not work this miracle in the name of God, but by His own power, by His infinite omnipotence. In the same way, by power of His will, He healed the sick servant of the centurion. Thus Jesus testified, by this truly divine act, to His divinity. Whence do we therefore know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is truly God? Not only did Jesus prove His divinity by these two great miracles, but by a prophecy as well. He commended the heathen centurion because of his great faith, and prophesied that many would come from the east, etc., and sit down with Abraham, etc., while the children of the kingdom would be cast off; meaning the Jews, to whom the Redeemer came, would be lost because of their stubborn unbelief, while the Gentiles in all parts of the world would gladly and believingly accept the Gospel, and be forever blessed. This prophecy has actually been fulfilled; the Jews have largely remained unbelievers, and have thereby excluded themselves from the kingdom of heaven, while millions of the heathen have been converted to the true faith and become Christians.

2. *The Heathen Centurion's Virtues.* The centurion was a virtuous man, who would put to shame many a Christian. (a) He possessed a sincere charity. His servant, a lowly slave, was sick unto death. Because he loved him, he desired to see him restored to health, and for this reason he ventured to petition Jesus to heal him. When is our charity sincere? (b) Because he was fond of his servant he had heartfelt sympathy with him in his pains and sufferings. The Saviour declares as blessed all those who have compassion and mercy upon their fellow men in their corporal and spiritual needs. What is the fifth of the eight beatitudes? (c) The centurion possessed a firm faith in the divinity of Jesus. He had heard of Jesus' numerous miracles, and he believed in Him as the Messiah. Therefore he sent to ask Jesus to cure his servant. He proved his faith still more by declaring before all the people that Jesus could heal the sick man merely by His almighty will, without even entering his house. When do we believe in the Christian sense? When is our faith firm? (d) The centurion possessed profound humility. Although the elders had assured the Lord that "the centurion was deserving of having his petition granted," yet he did not consider himself worthy that the Lord should enter his house. "Lord, I am not," etc.

3. *Heaven and Hell.* "Many shall come," etc. Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob had long been dead when Jesus spoke those words. If many were to sit at the table with them, then they must continue to live after death. There is therefore a continuance of life after death. Those who have believed upon earth and have lived good lives will sit at the table with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven; that means they will taste the celestial joys of everlasting salvation; the others who were unbelievers upon earth, or who did evil, will be cast into exterior darkness—that is to say, they will be thrown into hell, where they will howl with pain and frenzy and gnash their teeth. What is heaven? What is hell?

E. *Moral Application*.—Practise diligently the virtue of humility. Consider yourselves, on account of your sins, little before God and men, unworthy to receive God's blessings. Particularly when going to the Lord's banquet say frequently: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter into my heart."

XXV.—RAISING OF THE YOUNG MAN OF NAIM.

A. *Preparation*.—The approach of the festival of the Pasch, the second during the Lord's public life, caused Him to leave Capharnaum, and to journey to Jerusalem. On the way thither, as He passed the little town of Naim, to the south of Jerusalem, a corpse, wrapped in a shroud, was carried on a bier out of the city to be buried. Then Jesus worked another great miracle, of which we shall hear now.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The funeral procession. (b) The raising of the dead.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Behold a dead man was carried out." The body was not lying in a casket, but was enveloped in a winding sheet or shroud. "The only son of his mother, and she was a widow," who wept in her unspeakable sorrow as her only child was being borne to the grave, he who would have been her support in her old age. (b) "Jesus touched the bier," in order that the bearers should halt. "I say to thee, arise": I command thee. "And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak"; he had really returned to life. And He delivered him to his mother. What happiness, what joy, must that mother have experienced! How she must have embraced her son, and returned thanks to Jesus! "And fear came on them all," respect for Jesus who had worked so great a miracle. They glorified God, saying: "A prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people" with great graces.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Jesus' Divinity*. This was proved again, in a similar manner as in the foregoing story. Compare the words

of Jesus, "I will, be thou made clean," and "I say to thee, arise."

2. *Works of Mercy.* Jesus had heartfelt sympathy for the weeping and sorrowing mother. Hence He approached and sought to comfort her. To comfort the sorrowful is a spiritual work of mercy. Name the spiritual works of mercy.¹ The people, as a last token of respect for the dead, accompanied his remains to the grave. To bury the dead is a corporal work of mercy. What are the corporal works of mercy?²

E. *Moral Application.*—The great blessing which Jesus bestowed upon the youth He grants also you, in a certain sense, every morning by raising you from sleep to fresh and invigorated life. Never forget to return in your morning prayers heartfelt thanks to Him for this.

XXVI.—THE PENITENT MAGDALEN.

A. *Preparation.*—The fame of the great miracle worker, Jesus of Nazareth, had reached the ears of a Pharisee named Simon. Out of curiosity he invited Jesus to a repast at his house. We shall hear what took place there in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The weeping Magdalen. (b) Simon's pride. The unequal debt. (c) Praising of Magdalen and forgiveness of her sins.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Simon;" he dwelt at Magdala, on the lake Genesareth. As they sat at table there entered a woman named Mary of Magdala. She was of ill repute, on account of her sinful life. She brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, that is, of sweet smelling balsam, and as this ointment was expensive we are led to the conclusion that Mary was possessed of wealth. She began to weep over her sins. (b) Simon said to himself—thought to himself, "If this man were a prophet he would know who and what kind of woman it is that toucheth him;" namely, that this woman was a public sinner, and that he then would not permit a person of such evil repute to approach him. "Jesus spoke to him," giving him to understand thereby that He knew his thoughts. The two debtors; one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. By the first debtor Jesus referred to Magdalen, by the second to Simon. The creditor (meaning he to whom the money is owing) is Jesus (God) Himself. (c) "Then he turned to the woman," in order to make the comparison between Magdalen and Simon. "Thou gavest me no water for my feet, she hath washed them with her tears." Jesus wished to say: Through this rude neglect, you prove your want of love; she, however, by all that she has done for me, has attested her great love for me. Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much"; that means, on account of her great love

for me. "But to whom less is forgiven he loveth less." The reason, then, for the lesser forgiveness of sin is the lesser love. "Thy faith," in me, the Redeemer, "hath helped to the forgiveness of thy sins." "Go in peace"; that is to say, in peace of heart, which now, after the pardon of sins, has taken abode within thee.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus of Nazareth True God.* Jesus knew the thoughts which arose in Simon when Magdalen wept at the Lord's feet. He revealed thereby a divine attribute, omniscience, and therefore His divinity. What do you mean by saying "God is omniscient"? 2. *Magdalen a Figure, or Type, of Genuine Penance.* Magdalen, young, beautiful and rich, led a scandalous life. Then she heard of the great miracle worker Jesus. More from motives of curiosity than from a desire for salvation she mingled with the crowds that accompanied Jesus. She heard His divine teaching, she saw the great miracles. A ray of divine grace reached her heart. She believed Jesus to be the Messias. She thought over her past life and perceived what a rude contrast it presented to the teachings and demands of Jesus. The miraculous healing of the paralytic and the pardoning of his sins, of which she had been a witness, caused her, too, to hope for forgiveness of her sins. She felt herself more and more attracted to Jesus. In proportion as her detestation of the sins, to which she had previously been addicted, increased, grew her desire to be delivered from the spiritual misery. She hastened forthwith to Jesus, in order to make to Him a contrite confession of her sins. Uninvited, unannounced, she entered the Pharisee's house. Fearlessly, free from false shame, she knelt humbly at the Lord's feet, and bedewed them, in silent grief, with burning tears of sorrow. They were her confession of sins, simple and sincere enough, while by her profound abasement and her deed of love she rendered the satisfaction due for her sins to the grievously offended God. Her conversion was a sincere one. She renounced sin at once and forever. We find her frequently thereafter in the Saviour's company. She remained faithful to Him to the end of her life, which took place in strict seclusion from the world and under severe penitential practices. Whence does the justification of the sinner have its origin? What must the sinner do, on his part, in order to attain justification?

E. *Moral Application.*—Learn of Magdalen to detest sin and to flee the occasions; learn, too, of her to repent of the sad errors of your life and to do penance for them.

REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF JESUS, FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND EASTER FESTIVAL.

1. Brief account of this period. Jesus at the Easter festival in Jerusalem. Driving the sellers from the Temple. In Judea (Nicomemus); in Samaria (Sichar); in Nazareth; in Capharnaum, in Galilee; at the lake Genesareth; on a mountain near Capharnaum; in Capharnaum, at Naim and in Magdala (XXVI.). 2. Testimony (proofs) for the divinity of Jesus (cf. XV. to XXVI.). 3. On what occasion were mentioned and where are situated: (a) Jerusalem? (XV.) (b) Samaria, Sichar, Garizim? (XVII.) (c) Nazareth? (XVIII.) (d) Capharnaum, the province of Galilee? (XIX.) (e) The lake Genesareth? (XX.) (f) Naim? (XXV.) (g) Magdala? (XXVI.).

FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD EASTER FESTIVAL.

XXVII.—JESUS CURES A MAN WHO HAD BEEN SICK FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS.

A. *Preparation*.—The second Easter festival during the public life of the Lord had arrived, hence we find Jesus again at Jerusalem, where He performed a new and astonishing miracle.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The pond Bethsaida. (b) Cure of the sick man. (c) The reproach for profaning the Sabbath. (d) Justification of the Lord.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) A festival day of the Jews, the feast of Easter, or Pasch. "There"—in the neighborhood of the Temple. "Bethsaida," a Hebrew word meaning fish-pond. Here the sheep were washed before being sacrificed in the Temple. "Bethesda," a Greek word, meaning place of grace. It had five porches for the sick, to protect them from inclemency of the weather. (b) "Lord, I have no one"; that is to say, I desire to be healed, for this reason I am here, but I have no one to carry me down to the pond, as I am lame, and almost unable to move. The sick man therefore did not suspect what Jesus intended to do. "Bed," a litter. (c) "The Jews," that is to say the scribes and Pharisees, said to him, "it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed"; in their narrow-mindedness they considered it a desecration of the Sabbath. "He said to me, Take up thy bed and walk," meaning He gave me permission to do so. "Jesus went aside from the multitude," because He wished to avoid notice. In the Temple, where the man who had been healed betook himself, to return thanks to God. Jesus said to him: "Sin no more lest some worse thing happen to thee." His malady, therefore, was a conse-

quence and punishment for his sins. "The man went his way and told the Jews that it was Jesus," etc., so as to testify for Him, in his joyful gratitude. (d) "But Jesus answered them": in order to justify Himself against the reproach of breaking the Sabbath, which had been preferred against Him for healing the sick on that day. "My Father worked until now," meaning as my Father, since the seventh day of creation, the beginning of the eternal Sabbath, hath not been inactive, but hath worked in preserving and governing the world, "so do I work, the Sabbath notwithstanding." Hereupon the Jews sought more to kill Him. In their blindness they regarded Him as a blasphemer. "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son"; that means the private as well as the general or universal judgment of the world. "They that hear shall live"; that is to say, the spiritually dead, if they listen to the teaching of the Son of God and accept it, will possess the life of the soul and life everlasting. "All that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God," at the last day. "They shall come forth unto the resurrection of life," to heaven. "But they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment," to their damnation.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus True God and Son of God.* Of His own power and might Jesus healed the man who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years by His mere word: "Arise," etc. He thereby again revealed a divine attribute, omnipotence; His divinity, therefore. Furthermore, Jesus declares His divinity in this story clearly and distinctly by (a) calling God His Father; (b) attributing to Himself the same power as the Father is possessed of. ("What things soever the Father doth," etc.; "As the Father raiseth up the dead," etc.); (c) claiming for Himself the same honor as is due the Father ("That all men may honor the Son," etc.). What is Christ's testimony? 2. *The Seventh Article of the Creed.* Jesus reveals to us in this story that He will be the judge of all mankind, in the private judgment immediately after death as well as in the general judgment. In which of the articles of faith do we profess this to be our belief? What is the seventh article of the creed? 3. *The Eleventh Article of the Creed.* The Lord's words, "For the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves," etc., proves clearly that one day there will be a resurrection of the dead, which we profess in the eleventh article. How long does the body remain in the earth? 4. *The Sabbath.* The sanctifying of the Sunday is no less strictly commanded in the New Law as that of the Sabbath was in the Old Law. We are not allowed to do servile work on Sundays. What are servile works? But as the Saviour, in this story, allowed the man, who was healed, to carry his bed on the Sabbath, so, too, are we permitted, under special circumstances, to do work on Sundays.

What are these special circumstances? 5. *Relapse into Sin.* The Saviour warned the man whom He had healed to sin no more. The relapse into sin is worse than the first fall; not infrequently it results in hardness of heart and impenitence. It is far more difficult, after a relapse, to obtain the forgiveness of sin, than it is after the first fall. Of this those persons should take notice who do not use efforts to avoid grievous sin and the near occasions.

E. *Moral Application.*—Be careful not to relapse into sin! By repeatedly relapsing into favorite sins you will become accustomed to them and you will lose the detestation, without which you can not arouse a valid contrition. After a relapse, God requires more contrition from you, in order to forgive you, than after the first fall.

XXVIII.—THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST. COMMENDATION OF MARY. THE SIGN OF JONAS.

A. *Preparation.*—After the Easter festival Jesus left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee, where He taught again and worked miracles. We shall hear about this now.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The healing of the man possessed by the devil. (b) The sin against the Holy Ghost. (c) Mary is declared blessed. (d) The sign of Jonas.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Jesus cast out a devil and the same was blind and dumb, meaning the evil spirit had made the man (he possessed) blind and dumb. "Son of David," meaning the Messiah, who was a descendant of David. The multitude supposed this because they had just seen the great miracle. "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub"; that means the Pharisees supposed Jesus had power from the chief devil to drive out devils. (b) "But He, seeing their thoughts," knowing them, said: "Doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you," meaning the kingdom of the Messiah; consequently, I am the Messiah. "He who is not with me is against me." The Pharisees were guilty of this sin, because they maliciously attributed to the power of Satan the driving out of the devil by the Holy Spirit. "Generation of vipers," brood of snakes; the Pharisees were so called on account of their malice. "How can you speak good things, whereas you are evil," meaning they could only speak evil because they were themselves wicked. "Out of the fulness of the heart"; this means that the lips speak evil if the heart is full of wickedness, and they speak good if the heart is filled with goodness. A good man, out of a good treasure, bringeth forth good things, meaning out of a good heart in which he preserves good as if it were a treasure. "Man shall render an account for every idle word"; that means every sinful word. (c) "A woman

from the crowd lifted up her voice," fired with enthusiasm for the Lord, and said: "Blessed is the woman that bore thee," meaning thy mother is blessed. Jesus answered: "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." This means my mother is not to be called blessed because she is my mother, but much more because she has heard the word of God, believed and obeyed it. (d) The Pharisees ask for a sign, that is to say a miracle, whereby they might know whether Jesus was really He whom He represented Himself to be, namely, the Messiah. "The adulterous generation"—Jesus meant thereby the Jews, whose representatives had just spoken to Him, and whom He so designated because they had frequently broken the covenant made with God. "A sign shall not be given them; but the sign of Jonas"; Jesus therefore would not work for them an extraordinary miracle, that they might believe Him to be the Messiah, because, as God, He foresaw that even then they would not believe. "Three days and three nights." According to Jewish custom the first and last were counted full days. "In the bowels of the earth"—in the grave. "Behold more than Jonas here," meaning I am a greater prophet than Jonas. The queen of the south—of Sheba. "Behold more than Solomon here," meaning I am wiser than Solomon, because I am the eternal wisdom. Jesus wished to say by this: The Ninivites believed Jonas, and were converted; the queen of Sheba believed in Solomon's wisdom, and you will not believe me, although I am more than Jonas, more than Solomon, and I work many miracles before you.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Calumny*. Through the Pharisees ascribing the miracles of the Lord to Satan's influence they gave Him a bad reputation, as if He were allied with the devil, and therefore a great sinner. This was a great calumny. How do we sin by calumny? 2. *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*. Although the Pharisees could not deny Jesus' miracles, especially the miracle of driving out the devil, just worked before their eyes, still they would not believe in the divine power of Jesus. From envy toward the Lord, whose reputation was ever becoming greater among the people, as well as from motives of hatred toward Him who so often unveiled their hypocrisy and villainy before every one, they preferred to ascribe these miracles to the devil's agency, rather than to the power and might of God. Thereby they sinned against the Holy Ghost, who through these miracles, as well as by His illuminating grace, strove to convince them of the Lord's divinity, as well as of the truth of His doctrine. The Pharisees therefore resisted the recognized (Christian) truth, became more and more blinded and hardened against the salutary exhortations of Jesus, and remained impenitent unto the end. Which are the six sins against the Holy Ghost? The Lord says of these sins, that "they shall neither be forgiven in this life nor in the life to come"; namely, the one who

commits these sins against the Holy Ghost renders perpetual resistance to His graces; and, as without grace no one can repent of his sins and obtain forgiveness, the consequence is that such sinners can not find pardon here nor in the next world. Can we, too, resist grace? With what does the justification of the sinner begin? Of course, if a man ceases to sin against the Holy Ghost and ceases to resist His graces, it is understood that his sins can be forgiven, and that he can become reconciled to God. Can all our sins be remitted?

3. *Purgatory*. If the divine Saviour says that there are sins which are forgiven neither here nor in the next world, it follows that there must be a place in the hereafter where sins can be expiated. This can neither be in heaven, because there "nothing defiled" enters, nor in hell, for no one can return from there. Consequently, there must be a third place where this is possible, and this place we call Purgatory. Which souls go to Purgatory? 4. *The Resurrection*. The Jews demanded a sign from the Lord, that means an extraordinary miracle, so that they might be convinced of His divinity. But as the Lord foresaw that even then they would not believe in Him, He did not comply with their demand, but contented Himself with giving them a prophecy. "As Jonas was for three days and nights in the belly of a whale, so also will the Son of man (the Messiah) rest for three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth (the grave)."

E. *Moral Application*.—Be on your guard not to resist the grace of the Holy Spirit by continuing in sin, as you may otherwise become a sinner against the Holy Ghost. A frequent sin against the Holy Ghost is committed by thinking, I can commit this sin without fear of punishment, because I am going to confess it and thus gain forgiveness.

XXIX.—THE SERMON ON THE LAKE. PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

A. *Preparation*.—In the evening of the same day on which the Lord had delivered the possessed man from a devil He repaired to the lake Genesareth, and from a ship spoke the following beautiful parables to the multitudes:

I. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

B. *Narration*.—The Saviour presents here an event from nature in order to make clear to them a religious moral truth. By parables

we understand a relation of possible occurrences from nature or the human life by which a religious or moral truth is presented and made clear to us. The Saviour frequently made use of parables in order to make it easier for the people to understand His doctrine. It was also the custom of the teachers of the East to talk in parables.

C. *Explanation.*—"But others," some of the seeds. "Those who hear," who pay attention well. "That which fell upon stony ground," meaning those in whose hearts the word of God falls as if upon stony ground (upon rock). "It withered away because it had no roots," meaning that the word of God does not take root in them, and "in time of temptation they fall away," namely, from the observing of the commandments and from the faith. The occasion for this and the foregoing story was the hardness of heart and the resistance of the Pharisees, already spoken of, to accept the doctrine of Jesus, and to become thereby members of the kingdom of God (heaven), which Jesus preached.

D. *Commentary.*—The Saviour Himself has given us the meaning of this parable. Its fundamental thought is as follows: The effect of the divine word in men's hearts depends upon their disposition to accept (hear) the word of God. Often the word of God produces no fruit in men's hearts; that is to say, many persons hear the word of God (the sermon) without amending their indifferent or sinful lives. We may distinguish three classes in particular: (a) The superficial, worldly persons. They hear the word of God, it is true, but they do not comprehend the glorious teachings of the Gospel. As the seed by the roadside, so this precious grain of God's word lies on the surface, as it were, of their hard, unsusceptible hearts; for, as the word of God makes no impression upon them, they refuse to let this priceless seed sink into their hearts. It is "trodden upon," crushed by their worldliness; the distractions of the world soon efface even the remembrance of it, and their evil spirit soon crushes it out of their hearts, either by inciting them to weariness for the word of God, or by representing the observance of the same as entirely too difficult. (b) The inconstant persons. They hear the word of God joyfully; that is to say, they accept it willingly into their hearts, they have a good will, make good resolutions to observe the commandments, to avoid in the future those sins which have just been denounced in the sermon. But, as the seed that falls upon the stony ground can not bear fruit, and soon

withereth, so likewise these persons fail in carrying out their good resolutions. If the observance of God's word becomes in the least difficult, or if temptations beset them, they fall away, they deviate from the good Christian life, and relapse into their former evil ways of living. They lack, accordingly, firmness of faith and steadfastness. When is our faith firm? When is it steadfast?

(c) Sensual persons. They hear the word of God, but their hearts resemble a field that is untidy—full of weeds, thorns and thistles. Such persons may possess the faith, but they do not live according to it. The cares, riches, pleasures and enjoyments of this life and the impure desires choke the seed of the word of God; they do not allow a pious, virtuous life to thrive in them. Their faith is not a living one. When is our faith a living one?

E. *Further Development.* *—Three dangerous enemies menace the seed of the divine word: Concupiscence, the world, with its attractions, charms, distractions and pleasures, and the devil. These strive zealously to render the word of God in men's hearts unfruitful. 2. The conditions for the fruitfulness of God's word in the hearts of men are as follows: We must (a) hear the word of God, that is to say, listen to it with rapt attention; (b) preserve it in a good heart, meaning, ponder over the good lessons and admonitions of the sermon, either in church or at home, and apply them to our lives; (c) bear fruit in patience, meaning, mind in future that what we have heard, live according to it, and if, in our striving after virtue, difficulties and temptations arise in our path, we must not lose *patience*.

F. *Moral Application.*—How have you assisted at sermons so far? If you would take to heart one good lesson only in every sermon, and arrange your life in accordance with it, you would soon make great progress in virtue and perfection.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE SEED AND THE COCKLE.

C. *Explanation.*—"The kingdom of heaven." By this is meant the kingdom of God upon earth, the Church, whose members are educated for heaven. The seeds are alike, resemble one another. The Son of Man—Jesus Christ. Children of the kingdom: the children of God, good men. Children of the wicked, or of sin: wicked men. They shall be cast into the furnace—into hell.

D. *Commentary.*—The chief thought of this parable is the fol-

* For the higher classes.

lowing: In the Church there will be good and bad people (like the cockle in the wheat). This, however, is absolutely no proof against the sanctity of the Church, for the Catholic Church, by calling herself holy, does not mean to say that she consists only of saints, but that all her members are called to sanctity; her doctrine is not responsible for the cockle, the bad Catholics. Her doctrine is holy because it descends from the sacred lips of the Son of God. Why must the true Church be holy? Is the Roman Catholic Church holy? The evil in the Church comes from the devil, who, envious of redeemed mankind, seeks to injure them and to plunge them into the same misfortune and misery that he suffers. Nevertheless, as the long-suffering God desires "not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live," He bears with the wicked until the time of the harvest, until the rewarding in the hereafter. What do you mean by saying "God is long-suffering"? As the husbandman would not allow the cockle to be pulled up for fear of pulling the wheat up at the same time, thus God endures the wicked with the good in His Church, not only for the sake of the wicked, that they may, through the virtuous example of the good, be induced to amendment, but more especially on account of the good, that they, by the bad behavior of sinners, should receive a greater aversion for evil, flee and hate sin, and also, through persecution and oppression by the wicked, have occasion to gain greater merits for heaven.

E. *Further Development.**—1. The universal judgment: At the end of the world the Son of Man will separate the wicked from the good, and judge them according to their works (seventh article of the creed). 2. Hell: The wicked will be cast into the furnace. What is the lot of the damned in hell? 3. Heaven: "The good shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father," meaning in heaven. What will be the reward of the blessed in heaven? What will be the condition of the bodies of the risen?"

F. *Moral Application.*—Do you perhaps belong to the cockle in the seed? This is the case if you have done wrong, sinned and given scandal; that means if you have led your brothers, sisters or classmates to do evil. See to it that in the future you belong to the "wheat," so that you, too, may one day "shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father."

* For the higher classes.

III. PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED, THE LEAVEN, OF THE
TREASURE IN THE FIELD, OF THE PEARL AND
THE FISHING NET.

C. *Explanation.*—"The kingdom of heaven." That means the Church. "It grows up to be a tree." In Palestine this plant attains a height of from ten to twenty feet, having boughs and branches.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven." Here, as well as in the two following parables, by the kingdom of heaven is understood the kingdom of God in mankind, the kingdom of grace and truth.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net." That means the kingdom of God in us, the Church (cf. this with the cockle among the wheat). Jesus asked them if they had understood all these things, and they answered, Yea!

D. *Commentary.*—In the parable of the mustard seed Jesus foretells the miraculous growth of His church. As the mustard seed is a small grain, yet grows so big that "the birds come and settle under its branches," so in the beginning, the Church of Christ was small; it grew constantly and quickly, and has by this time spread all over the entire globe. For this reason we call the Catholic Church universal? Is the Church of Rome catholic or universal? In the parable of the leaven Jesus points out the effect of the Catholic Church. As the leaven permeates the flour, making it palatable, so also the Church, with her teachings and her graces, leavens mankind, leads them to virtue and holiness, making them thereby acceptable to God. Why did Jesus found His Church? On account of the truth which the Church teaches, and on account of the graces which she dispenses, the Church should be as dear to us as a treasure, as a precious pearl. Whosoever, therefore, is not a member of the Church must sacrifice everything (money, possessions, position in life) in order to attain this precious pearl, without which he can not be saved. Why do we say that salvation is found only in the Catholic Church? Those, however, who have already won this treasure, this pearl—namely, those who have the happiness of being a member of the Catholic Church—must strive to preserve this pearl; they must preserve in themselves the truth which the Church teaches, believe it, and live according to the graces that she dispenses. What must we do in order to be saved? The last parable (that of the net) has for its foundation the same meaning as the first (the cockle among the wheat).

E. *Further Development.**—The second petition of the "Our

*For the higher classes.

Father": There is a triple kingdom of God: the kingdom of God around us (the Church), the kingdom of God in us (grace and truth), a kingdom of God above us (heaven). What do we ask for in the second petition? "Thy kingdom come."

F. *Moral Application*.—You are members of God's kingdom upon earth (the Church). Preserve His kingdom within you, namely, sanctifying grace, in order that you may one day be admitted into the other kingdom of God—heaven.

XXX.—THE TEMPEST AT SEA.

A. *Preparation*.—After Jesus had ended His glorious sermon He sailed with His disciples on the Lake Genesareth. What happened there we shall learn in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The voyage. (b) The tempest.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Jesus said to His apostles: "Let us pass to the other side." He wished to avoid the crowding of the people. They crossed the lake and reached the other shore, in the neighborhood of Gadara. Jesus slept, because He was greatly fatigued. (b) Soon after starting a violent tempest arose, "the sea raged and mountainous waves threatened to engulf the boat." "Why are you fearful"—for what reason? "He rebuked the storm"—commanded it to be still. "And a great calm ensued," meaning the storm abated and the waves were smoothed. "The people"—the apostles and those who had followed the Lord in other ships.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God and True Man*. Jesus "commanded the storm and the sea and there was a great calm." This sudden calm which Jesus effected by virtue of His will and word was a fresh proof of His omnipotence, therefore, of His divinity while His sleeping, brought on by great fatigue and exhaustion, was a clear proof of His human nature. How many natures, accordingly, are there in Christ? 2. *Purpose of the Miracle*. The miracle which Jesus worked had a double purpose: (a) Jesus wished to fortify the faith in His divinity of the apostles and of the people accompanying Him. (b) He wished to impress upon the apostles, through this miracle, that in all perils and persecutions, in the practising of their future calling, they might rely and confide in His assistance and help. 3. *Symbolical Meaning of the Tempest*. The sea is an image of the world, the little ship a figure of the Church. As the storm at sea imperiled the little craft, yet

did not engulf it, so, too, the Church of Christ, in the course of time, has been hard-pressed by violent persecutions, without, however, having been destroyed by them. For Jesus is with His Church, protects it, and His omnipotence has at all times stepped in at the right moment of the numerous persecutions the Church has undergone, and He will again do so if fresh storms should arise and rage against the Church.

E. *Moral Application.*—As the Lord is with His Church and protects her in all sufferings and persecutions, so, too, is He with each one of us. When the storm of temptation rises against you be not discouraged, and cry out confidently to the Lord: "Lord, save me, I perish."

XXXI.—THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS AND THE WOMAN AFFLICTED WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD.

A. *Preparation.*—The people whom Jesus had taught in the Sermon on the Lake awaited anxiously His return, and when at last He came they rejoiced exceedingly. Jesus then worked two new and great miracles at Capharnaum, about which we shall hear now.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The petition of Jairus. (b) The healing of the sick woman. (c) The raising to life of Jairus' daughter.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "When Jesus returned," namely, to Capharnaum. "Ruler of a synagogue." In this capacity Jairus had to supervise the sacred services. "My daughter is at the point of death," meaning in her death agony. "Jairus' daughter becomes worse," that is to say, her illness had taken a bad turn. (b) The sick woman pressed forward to Jesus, hoping to find help, that she might be released from her trouble—disease. "She touched his garment." Jesus knew who had done this, but He desired the woman to make known before the multitude this miraculous cure, in order that those present should be strengthened in their faith in His divinity. "The virtue which proceeded from him," that means the virtue which had healed that woman. "The woman trembled," from fear and reverence for Jesus, whose divinity she recognized in consequence of the miraculous healing. (c) "Why dost thou trouble the Master longer?" Jesus said to Jairus, "Fear not!" meaning do not be worried on account of your daughter's death; "only believe," namely, in my divinity, which has just this moment been revealed again. "Were wailing and weeping"—the women, according to the custom of the Jews, wept and lamented in the house of mourning. "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," meaning her death is only a short sleep, out of which she will presently awaken. Jesus charged them strictly that no man should know it, because He was not eager for human approval. "The fame thereof spread abroad," that is to say, of this miraculous cure.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. In several ways the Lord proves His divinity in the events of this story. (a) He felt that a "virtue" had proceeded from Him; that is to say, He knew that the woman, by touching His garment, would immediately be healed. Jesus thereby revealed a divine attribute—omniscience. (b) He raised to life the daughter of Jairus by His mere word. "Damsel (I say to thee), arise!" He thus revealed His unlimited omnipotence as Lord over life and death. 2. *The Veneration of Relics*. The woman was instantly cured by touching the hem of Jesus' garment. We shall hear later on how numerous sick and possessed were healed as the girdle and handkerchief of the apostle Paul were laid upon them. In the same way God has frequently worked miracles by the relics of other saints. We are right, therefore, in honoring the relics of Christ (the holy cross, the holy coat at Treves, etc.) and of saints. Why do we venerate the relics, or remains, of the saints? 3. *Sleep an Image of Death*. Not without reason did the Saviour say: "The girl is not dead, but only sleepeth." For death has a great resemblance with sleep. (a) Both, as compared to eternity, are of short duration. (b) As man, after faithful work, falls easily asleep at night, so do the just, after living a pious and God-fearing life, die a peaceful death. (c) As the sleeper rests in his sleep from the day's exertions, so the just in death rest from their tribulations. (d) After refreshing, strengthening sleep there follows, in the morning, the glad awakening and rising. After the sleep of the just in the grave there follows a joyful awakening and a glorious resurrection on the last day. How long does the body remain in the earth? Will all men rise again? What will be the condition of the bodies of the risen?"

E. *Moral Application*.—You, too, will die one day, very likely sooner than you expect. Some die in their youth, as this story and daily experience teach. If you would die happily you must live a good and devout life. Remember, "As the tree falls, so it lies."

XXXII.—PREPARATORY MISSION OF THE APOSTLES AND OF THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES.

A. *Preparation*.—Jesus now went about Galilee preaching and working miracles. Great multitudes of people followed Him, and congregated quickly wherever He appeared. When Jesus saw the zeal of the people He had compassion upon them, and sent forth His apostles and the seventy-two disciples, that they might preach the Gospel in Judea. Hereby not only were the Jews

prepared for Jesus, but the apostles and disciples received training for their future activity (after the Lord's ascension). The following story will relate this to us:

B. *Narration*.—(a) The sending forth and instructing of the apostles. (b) Activity of the apostles and their return. (c) Sending forth the seventy-two disciples.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "They were as sheep not having a shepherd," as the Jewish priests sought to turn the great multitudes of people away from the Saviour, and thereby led them into error. "The harvest," namely, for the kingdom of heaven, because the Jewish people showed their desire for salvation by their attending the sermons of Jesus. The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few to preach the Gospel. For the Lord of the harvest, meaning God, "will gather them into his vineyard"—into His Church. The lost sheep—the Israelites. Healing of the sick—by such miracles the apostles were to accredit themselves as God's messengers. "If the house," that is to say, the inmates are worthy of it, meaning, of peace. "Whosoever shall not receive you, go from thence and shake the dust from your feet," as a sign that you do not wish to have any intercourse with them. "Behold, I send you as lambs among wolves." Jesus thereby announced to the apostles that they would be opposed, would be persecuted. "Be wise as serpents," meaning cautious; and "simple as a dove," meaning guileless, gentle and kind, even toward enemies. "All these things they will do to you for my name's sake," meaning, because you will announce my Gospel. "The disciple is not greater than he that sent him," meaning they have persecuted the Lord, and, therefore, you will not be spared. "Fear not those that kill the body, for the soul they can not kill," that is to say, be not afraid of the harm men do. Fear rather," etc., that is to say, God. "The hairs of your head are numbered." By whom? By God, in whose hands all things are. You, too, are in God's hands. "Those who will acknowledge me as their God and Lord, therefore confess their faith in me." "He that receiveth you, receiveth me"—because you come in my name. (b) And He said to them: "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest a little in body and soul." (c) "And he sent them forth, two and two," for the same purpose as the apostles.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Prayer for Good Priests*. The prayer for laborers in the vineyard of the Lord is just as necessary in our day as it was then. Of the 1,400 to 1,500 millions of inhabitants of the earth, only about 250 millions belong to the true Church of Christ. Many still languish in paganism and idolatry because there is a scarcity of laborers in the "Lord's vineyard." Even in Catholic centres there is often a great lack of priests. For this reason we should pray zealously for good priests. 2. *Fear of Man and Fear of God*. The Christian should not be prevented, by a cowardly fear of men, from confessing his faith in word and deed when

necessary, for men can at most only harm our body. Fear God much more, who can cast us into eternal perdition, body and soul, if we do evil or omit to do good. The fear of God is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Which are the gifts of the Holy Ghost? 3. *Confidence in God*. The Saviour Himself gives the reason why the Christian should not fear men. Everything is in God's hands, even the lowest and the least creature. No sparrow can fall from the roof without God wills it, neither can wicked men do injury without God's permission. With firm confidence in God, under whose protection we stand, we should therefore make intrepid acknowledgment of our faith. The reward for this is heaven. "He who confesses me before men," etc. 4. *Anointing the Sick*. The apostles "anointed the sick with oil, and cured them." This is the first indication and figure of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. As the sick regained their health by being anointed with oil, so does Extreme Unction bring about the health of the soul, and often that of the body as well. What is Extreme Unction? What effect has Extreme Unction for the well-being of the soul and body?

E. *Moral Application*.—Do not be afraid to profess your Catholic faith before men. It would be cowardice if you would omit prayers, or, for instance, omit to lift your hat to a crucifix because afraid or ashamed of others. Reflect upon the words of the Lord: "Whoso confesses me," etc.

XXXIII.—JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON AND PUT TO DEATH.

A. *Preparation*.—While Jesus and His apostles and disciples were preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, John was languishing in prison. What happened to him there we shall now hear.

B. *Narration*.—(a) John in prison. (b) His message to Jesus. (c) Herod's birthday. (d) The beheading of John. (e) Burial of the body.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Herod, a son of the cruel Herod, who had attempted to take the life of the Child Jesus, had married the wife of his still living brother Philip, which was forbidden by the law. Because John rebuked him for this, Herod threw him into prison (cf. XVII.). The prison was in the fortress Macharus, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. Herodias, Herod's wife, also hated John, because he had denounced her union with Herod. (b) John had heard, from two disciples who frequently visited him, of Christ's works,

of His miracles. "Art thou He that art to come," meaning the Redeemer. John did not put this question to Jesus on his own account, for he had already testified before all the people that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Redeemer, but rather for the sake of His disciples, whom he wished to bring to Jesus, as he had a presentiment of his approaching death. "Go and relate to John," etc. Jesus therefore did not give a direct answer to that question, but referred, by His reply, "the blind see," etc., to a passage in *Isaias* where the latter says: "God himself will come and redeem you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened," etc. (O. T., LXXVII.). Accordingly John could instruct his disciples that Jesus was He of whom *Isaias* spoke in that passage, namely, the promised Redeemer. "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me," meaning, take offense at my poverty and lowliness. (c) Herodias rejoiced because the desired opportunity had come to put John, who was troublesome to her, to death. (d) She gave it to her mother, who (according to a legend) even derided the head of the corpse by sticking needles through the saint's tongue.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus of Nazareth the Promised Redeemer*. That Jesus referred to the prophecy of *Isaias* proves that He really was the Redeemer foretold by *Isaias*, as everything has been fulfilled in Him which that prophet had prophesied of the Redeemer. How do we know that Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer? 2. *The Spiritual Works of Mercy*. John had fearlessly reproved Herod for his wrong (which?). By this admonition and reproof he wished to move the sinful Herod to contrition and to an amendment of life. To exhort the sinner is a spiritual work of mercy. Which are the spiritual works of mercy? 3. *The Sins Committed on Herod's Birthday*. On Herod's birthday innumerable and grievous sins were committed. (a) By Herod himself. He sinned (1) by swearing thoughtlessly. There was no need of an oath. When do we sin by swearing? Herod sinned (2) by cowardly fear of men. On account of the guests, from fear, therefore, of being considered a weakling, he did not refuse the girl's sinful request. Consequently, he gave the order to have John slain, and sinned thus (3) by murder. When do we sin against the natural life of our neighbor? (b) By Herodias. 1. She bore in her heart an implacable hatred toward John, and sought opportunity to put him out of the world. Does the fifth commandment forbid only the actual wicked deed against our neighbor's life? 2. She gave her daughter the wicked counsel to ask for something sinful—wicked. To what class of sins does this belong? Which are the nine ways of being accessory to another's sins? (c) By the daughter of Herodias. She sinned by obeying her mother in a sinful matter.

In which cases is it not permissible to obey even parents? (d) By the guests. It was their duty to try and prevent Herod from carrying out a sinful deed; instead of that they acquiesced in his sin, and therefore sinned themselves.

E. *Moral Application*.—John did not keep silent concerning Herod's sin, but told him fearlessly "that it was not lawful"; so, too, must you not be silent if you see your brothers, sisters or companions do or say something wrong, but you must reprove them or tell parents or teachers about it. Those who keep silent about the sins of others render themselves accessory to those sins.

XXXIV.—THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

A. *Preparation*.—A short time after the beheading of John the apostles returned from their mission, and Jesus betook Himself with them to a desert place, as we already heard (see XXXII.). This was on the other side of the sea of Galilee, on the northeast coast, and in an uninhabited, sterile country. Even to this desert place the Lord was followed by a large number of people, who wished to hear his teaching. Here Jesus worked another great miracle, of which we shall now hear.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Arrival and activity of Jesus in the retired spot. (b) Feeding of the five thousand and collection of the fragments. (c) Gratitude of the people.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Jesus "withdrew himself," etc., because Herod sought to entrap Him, and the time of His Passion and death had not yet come. (b) "Disperse the multitude," meaning send them home. "Give them to eat." Could the apostles do this? Certainly; they had the power to work miracles, received from the Lord (cf. XXXII.), only at that moment they had forgotten about it. Jesus wished to put them to the test, and He quite expected Philip's answer: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them." Andrew saith to Jesus: "There is a boy here who hath five barley loaves." (c) When the people saw what Jesus had done they exclaimed: "This is the prophet, indeed, that is to come into the world," meaning the Messias. Jesus fled again into the mountain to pray for the people, who had an entirely false idea of the Messias. They believed the Messias would come as a mighty king, to deliver Israel from the servitude of Rome, and restore the ancient glory to the Jewish kingdom.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. The Lord so multiplied the few loaves and fishes that five thousand men, not counting women and children, satisfied their hunger, and there remained, over and above, twelve basketsful of crumbs; more, therefore, than was there at the beginning. By this great miracle Jesus revealed

anew His omnipotence, His divinity. 2. *Purpose and Significance of this Miracle.* Besides the general purpose of strengthening His disciples in the belief of His divinity, and of awakening this belief in the people, the divine Saviour, in this miracle, had in view the special end of preparing disciples and people for belief in the Holy Eucharist, which on the following day He promised to them, in the synagogue at Capharnaum. This miracle had therefore a profound symbolical significance: (a) By the miraculous multiplying of the bread was typified that other miraculous multiplying of bread which annually takes place in our fields, where from one single grain of seed there grows an ear of corn with numerous little grains. (b) As the thousands partook of the miraculous loaves, and there remained twelve basketsful of fragments, so the millions of Catholics receive Holy Communion without the species being consumed. 3. *Grace at Meals.* The divine Saviour thanked first of all the heavenly Father before He distributed the bread. So should we raise up our hearts to God, before eating, by saying grace. When ought we to pray especially? How do you say grace before and after meals?

E. *Moral Application.*—Do you always say grace at meals? If you do not, then make a resolution to do so from this day forth.

XXXV.—JESUS WALKS UPON THE WATERS AND HEALS THE SICK.

A. *Preparation.*—After praying on the mountain, Jesus betook Himself, while it was yet night, to the lake, following His disciples, who were in their ship far from shore. We shall hear more about this in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Return voyage of the disciples. (b) Jesus upon the sea. (c) Landing at Genesareth.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) The little vessel was tossed hither and thither. They had lost control of the ship, which had become the sport of wind and waves. (b) When the disciples saw Jesus walking upon the water they were afraid and thought it was a spectre. It was not yet day, just dawning and misty, so that the disciples did not recognize the Lord. Peter left the ship, filled with confidence in the Lord's omnipotence. But seeing the wind was strong he became fearful and began to doubt, whereupon he sank immediately in the water as punishment. "Presently the ship reached the land"—in a moment, although the distance was some miles. "And all those that were in the ship came and worshipped him," namely, the apostles. (c) "Genesareth," a wide plain, between Magdala and Bethsaida, on the western shore of the lake of the same name. The men of that place sent out into the surrounding country and announced the coming of Jesus. The sick besought

Jesus for permission to touch the hem of His garment. They had heard how a woman (XXXI.) had thus been made whole.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus True God.* Jesus proves His divinity in these events in a fourfold manner: (a) He walks upon the water. (b) He allows Peter, likewise, to walk upon the water. (c) He calms the storm as He entered the ship, and brought it to land in an instant. (d) He cured many diseased persons by permitting them to touch the hem of His garment. 2. *Purpose of this Miracle.* The Lord worked all these miracles to confirm the disciples and the people in their faith in His divinity (cf. XXXIV.). 3. *Peter's Faint-heartedness and Punishment.* As long as Peter regarded the Lord with full confidence, neither wind nor wave could harm him, but just as soon as he turned his eyes away from the Lord, and looked with fear at the heaving seas, he sank immediately, as punishment for being distrustful and doubtful of the omnipotence of Jesus. Neither can the storms of temptation harm us as long as we look up to Jesus with full confidence. When we doubt of His assistance, however, then we are overcome by temptation and sin.

E. Moral Application.—When strongly tempted to sin, call confidently upon the Lord, "Lord help me," and be assured that God will not let you sink, but will rescue you with His powerful hand.

XXXVI.—PROMISE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

A. Preparation.—After Jesus had healed the sick He went into the synagogue at Capharnaum, where He gave a wonderful promise to the assembled people.

B. Narration.—(a) The miraculous living bread of heaven. (b) The Lord's body a food, His blood a drink. (c) The Jews take offense. (d) Many of the disciples desert; loyalty of the apostles.

C. Explanation.—"Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" They could not comprehend how and when Jesus could have reached Capharnaum. Jesus did not reply to this question. He proved by the following words that He is omniscient and knew the reason why they had sought Him: "Labor, not for the meat which perisheth," namely, bread, "but for that which endureth unto everlasting life," meaning for a food which will never perish as long as the world shall stand, and through the partaking of which we gain life eternal. "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life," that means faith is necessary for salvation. "The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world," that is to say, my flesh, which I shall give (as food) in

order that the world (mankind) shall possess eternal life in heaven. (b) His disciples, hearing it, said: "This saying is hard, who can hear it?" In their material way of thinking, the Jews understood that they would have to partake of the dead flesh of the Lord, human flesh, therefore. To be sure, Jesus had said, and repeated it in the following, that man must partake of His flesh in order to attain eternal life; but at the very beginning He had spoken of a bread, and intended to give them His flesh in the form of bread. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." That means the life of the soul, sanctifying grace, is an indispensable condition of eternal life in heaven. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him;" therefore, by partaking of the body and blood of Jesus there takes place a perfect union of man with Jesus. "As the living Father," meaning God the Father, "hath sent me" into the world, "and I live by the Father," namely, as man upon earth, "so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me," because he possesses me, the living God. (c) The Jews were scandalized and angry that Jesus should suggest to them the eating of His flesh. "This saying is hard." Jesus asked too much; they could not believe it. "When you shall see the Son of man," etc.; that is to say, when you behold me ascending into heaven, will you not believe in me even then? "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," etc. You must not think of a body of dead flesh, but of a body in the spiritual sense. "The words that I have," etc.; that is to say, I mean by that flesh my spiritualized, glorified, living body. "But there are some of you that believe not" my words, although I have proved my divinity by so many miracles, and for this reason I speak the truth to you now. (d) "Many of the disciples walked no more with him"; they fell away from Him. There remained, however, with Jesus the seventy-two disciples (cf. III.) and the apostles; also other disciples, and many pious women. Simon Peter said: "And we have believed and have known," etc.; therefore, we also believe these Thy words.

D. Commentary.—1. The Most Holy Eucharist. The Lord's words of promise contain the complete doctrine concerning the Holy Eucharist. (a) Meaning. The divine Saviour promised, in the synagogue at Capharnaum, that He would give to men an imperishable food, and that this food would be Himself. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," etc. The bread that He would give was His flesh, His body. His body was truly a food and His blood was truly a drink. At the same time, He signified that it was not His dead body that was to be understood by this food, for "the flesh profiteth nothing," but that He would give as food His spiritualized, glorified body. "It is the spirit that quickeneth." A year later the divine Saviour had actually fulfilled this promise, as we shall hear later on. What is the Holy Eucharist? **2. Holy Communion.** (a) Christ taught: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." This partaking of the body and blood of the Lord, by which we are entirely united

with Him, we call Communion (union). What is Holy Communion? (b) The Saviour expressly commands, under pain of losing eternal happiness, that we should receive His most holy Body. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man," etc. Are we obliged to receive Holy Communion? (The fourth commandment of the Church.) (c) Although the Lord spoke upon several occasions of the partaking of His flesh and blood, yet He said also "He that eateth this bread shall live forever." Hence by partaking under the form of bread we receive just the same what the Lord intended we should by receiving under both forms. For the Lord with His spiritualized, that is to say, glorified, and therefore living body, is present under the form of bread, thus we receive, in this form, also His blood, as a living body can not be imagined without blood. Must we, in order to partake of the blood of Christ, drink of the chalice? (d) Christ has pointed out, likewise, the operations of grace in Holy Communion, in the words of promise: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." Holy Communion joins most intimately the receiver to Christ, and from this wonderful union proceed all other spiritual benefits bestowed in Holy Communion, as the increase of sanctifying grace, etc. In conclusion, the Lord promises to the recipient of His sacred body eternal life, and that He will raise him up on the last day. What graces do we partake of in the Holy Communion?

E. Moral Application.—The miraculous bread of which the Lord speaks is preserved, as you know, in the tabernacle upon the altar. Jesus Himself is hidden there under the form of bread; He is Himself there present. Show, therefore, profound reverence when entering a church. Bend your knee before the tabernacle. Pray fervently and humbly to your Saviour, present under the form of bread, especially during and after consecration at Mass. Visit Him often in the church, where He is so frequently left alone.

With this story the fourth period of Jesus' life ends. Between this and the events of the following story falls the Pasch festival, the third during the public life of Jesus. Without doubt the Lord celebrated this festival in Jerusalem, but mindful of the hostile feeling which existed against Him there, among the Scribes and Pharisees, He did not appear publicly, so as not to excite still further the hatred of His enemies, since the hour of His passion had not yet come. He left Jerusalem soon after the festival.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD OF THE PUBLIC LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD EASTER FESTIVAL.

1. Short account of the incidents of this period: Jesus at Jerusalem for the Easter festival (XXVII.) ; in Galilee (XXVIII.) ; on the lake (Sermon on the Lake) and storm at sea (XXIX., XXX.) ; at Capharnaum (XXXI.) ; at Galilee (XXXII.) ; beheading of John (XXXIII.) ; in the desert, multiplying of the loaves (XXXIV.) ; return to Capharnaum (XXXV., XXXVI.). 2. Proofs of the divinity of Jesus (cf. XXVII., XXX., XXXI., XXXIV., XXXV.). 3. Jesus, the promised Redeemer (XXXIII.). 4. Upon what occasion were mentioned and where are situated: (a) Jerusalem? (XXVII.) (b) The province of Galilee? (XXVIII., XXXII.) (c) The lake Genesareth? (XXIX., XXX., XXXV.) (d) The desert? (XXXIV.) (e) The province of Genesareth? (XXXV.) (f) Capharnaum? (XXXI., XXXVI.).

FROM THE THIRD TO THE FOURTH EASTER FESTIVAL.

XXXVII.—THE WOMAN OF CHANAAN. HEALING OF THE DEAF MUTE.

A. *Preparation.*—After the Easter festival Jesus returned into Galilee, and proceeded to the northern part of this province, near the boundary of Tyre and Sidon, and from there He betook Himself again to the neighborhood of Lake Genesareth. In this locality the events recorded in the following story took place.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The woman of Chanaan. (b) Healing of a deaf mute.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "One day"—after the Easter festival. "A woman," who was a Gentile. "But he answered her not a word," so as to put her faith to the proof. His disciples besought Him to "send her away"; that means to grant her request, in order that she might depart. "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel," meaning to the Israelites, not to the Gentiles. "Let the children first be filled," meaning let the Jews be first looked after. "It is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs." The Gentiles were so named because they practised idolatry and immorality. With this harsh rebuff the Lord desired to test still further the faith of this Gentile woman. "The whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children." The woman adapted herself to the

comparison used by the Lord, yet at the same time begged the Lord to grant her petition, which, in proportion to the numerous blessings Jesus had shown the Jews, was but like a little crumb. (b) Jesus passed through the cities on the sea of Galilee, on the eastern side of the same, which were almost entirely settled by Gentiles. "And they bring to him one that was deaf and dumb, and they besought him to lay his hand upon him," to heal him. And Jesus took him aside, in order to turn the attention of the people to the miracle He was about to work. "Looking up to heaven he groaned," because of the sin of which the illness of the deaf mute was a consequence. "The string of his tongue was loosed"; a figurative expression, because the tongue, the speech of the mute, was, as it were, tied, so that he could not use it. He "spoke right," meaning like a well man. "He hath done all things well"—hath made him whole.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. Proof, by the two miracles, of the divinity of Jesus. Virtues of the woman of Chanaan. Like the heathen centurion at Capharnaum, the heathen woman of Chanaan possessed a number of glorious virtues: (a) Her firm faith. She had heard a great deal about the miracles of Jesus and believed in His omnipotence. Hence her fervent petition, that her daughter might be delivered from the evil spirit. (b) Her humility. Although the Lord compared the Gentiles, to which this woman belonged, to unclean dogs, still she was not offended. In her profound humility she even thought the Lord justly spoke thus. "Yea, Lord." (c) Her perseverance in prayer. Although rebuffed by the Lord, she ceased not to petition Him, until finally she was heard. When do we pray perseveringly? 2. *The Ceremonies*. As Jesus, in healing the deaf mute, made use of certain signs, in order to draw the attention of the people assembled to Himself, and that the deaf mute might understand what He was doing, so likewise does the Church, in her celebration of divine worship, as well as in dispensing the Sacraments, use certain significant proceedings in order to attract the attention of the faithful and render her acts comprehensible to them. These significant proceedings are called ceremonies. Whence have, therefore, the ceremonies customary at the administering of the Sacraments their origin?

E. *Moral Application*.—Take for your example the firm faith of the woman of Chanaan, and be careful not to doubt that what is taught you in religious instruction.

XXXVIII.—PREFERMENT OF PETER. AUTHORITY OF THE OTHER APOSTLES.

A. Preparation.—From the cities of the Gentiles on the coast of the sea of Galilee Jesus betook Himself northward, and went as far as Cesarea Philippi, a city also almost wholly inhabited by Gentiles. We shall now learn what happened there.

B. Narration.—(a) Preferment of Peter. (b) Authority of the other apostles.

C. Explanation.—(a) Jesus said to His disciples: "Whom do men say I am?" And they answered: "John the Baptist; but some Elias, and others, one of the prophets." Notwithstanding all the numerous miracles, the people did not believe that Jesus was the Redeemer. The Jews imagined that the Messiah would be a powerful prince, who would deliver Israel and make it again independent. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee," meaning not of yourself have you arrived at this knowledge and conviction, but by the grace of God, which has enlightened you. "Thou art Peter," the rock, "and upon this rock," therefore upon thee. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," meaning the power and efforts of hell, that is to say, the devil and all the wicked, allied with him, will not destroy the Church. "The keys of the kingdom of heaven"; that is to say, authority over the kingdom of heaven, meaning over the Church. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth"; that means the men whom you shall bind upon earth in their sins, that is to say, whose sins you shall retain, shall be bound also in heaven, meaning retained by God, and all those that you shall loose from their sins and punishment, that is to say, shall deliver, will also be loosed or delivered by God. (b) "If thy brother hath sinned against thee, by hurting or offending thee, reprove him for it, between thee and him alone," meaning without witnesses, in order to spare him the shame before others. "If he shall hear thee," and will amend, thou shalt gain thy brother" for God and for heaven. "And if he will not hear thee, tell the Church," meaning his superiors, so that they may strive to influence him for good. "And if he will not hear the Church," not listen to her remonstrances and exhortations, "let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican," as one therefore excluded from the Church, and thereby from heaven—a reprobate. If the Church (that is to say, her superiors) has shut any one out of the kingdom of heaven, or rejected him, he is also excluded or rejected by God, as is plain from these words.

D. Commentary.—I. *Jesus True God.* (a) Peter testifies solemnly: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." (b) Jesus accepts this profession of Peter's and declares him blessed. (c)

Jesus transmits to Peter the authority over heaven, which God only could do. 2. *Faith a Virtue Bestowed by God.* "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven." What is it to believe in the Christian sense? 3. *The Church of Jesus.* (a) From the Lord's words, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church," it follows that Christ founded *only one Church*. Did Christ found one or several churches? (b) This Church founded by Christ is built upon the rock Peter, meaning, as the foundation of an edifice is the first and most important part, so is Peter the first and most important person in the Church of Jesus. The other apostles are superiors in the Church. The Church, accordingly, is a visible institution, which is evident also from the Lord's words, "tell the Church," for if it was invisible, one would not know where to go to "tell it to the Church." Is this *one Church* founded by Christ easily recognizable? (c) Under pain of losing heaven we are obliged to obey the Church, for "whoso will not hear the Church," etc. What must we do, therefore, in order to be saved? 4. *The Primacy.* (a) Peter is the head of the Church. In the calling of Peter we had occasion to note his significant name. Now we perceive for what reason the Lord called him "Peter," meaning rock. Peter is the rock, the foundation stone, the first and most important person in the Church of Christ. He has received from the Lord the keys of the kingdom of heaven, meaning the supreme authority in the Church; for he who has possession of the keys of a building has authority over the same, and can open and shut it when and to whom he pleases. Whence do we perceive that Christ has appointed Peter the head of His Church? (b) Continuity of Peter's primacy in the Church. The Lord's words, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" mean, His Church shall never perish; the foundation, therefore, upon which it is built must continue. Peter died, but his authority and His primacy continue in the Church in his successors, to whom his authority is transmitted. Who is the visible head of the Church since the death of Peter? 5. *The Infallibility of the Church.* From the words of Jesus, "the gates of hell," etc., it follows that the Church can never deviate from the truth; for if she should, then hell—that is to say the devil, the "father of lies"—would have overcome the Church, and the words of the Lord would be contradicted. As little, however, as the words of the Son of God, and true God, can be contradicted by facts, as little can the teaching

office of the Church ever be in error. Who has assured the infallibility of the teaching office of the Church? Of whom is the teaching office in the Church composed? 6. *Infallibility of the Pope.* Not only is the teaching office of the Church, as a body, assured by Christ of infallibility, but also the supreme head of the Church, the Pope, who is infallible when pronouncing decisions in matters of faith, in his authority as head of the Church. Upon the rock of Peter the invincible Church of Jesus is founded. As the rock stands firm, and neither stirs nor moves, so, too, stands Peter, so, too, stand his successors, immutably firm in the truth; they can neither waver nor fail in the truth. When is the Pope infallible? Why is the Pope infallible in these decisions?

E. *Moral Application.*—Thank God for the great grace of being children of the one, true Church. Render yourselves worthy of this grace by conscientiously obeying your spiritual mother, the Church, and by faithfully observing her commandments. Assist at divine worship on Sundays and holydays! The law of abstinence. “He who has not the Church for his Mother can not have God for his Father!”

XXXIX.—THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS.

A. *Preparation.*—From Cesarea Philippi Jesus again wandered south, and went as far as Mount Thabor, to the north of Naim. With Peter, James and John He ascended the mountain, while the other apostles waited at the foot of it. We shall learn in the following story what took place upon the mountain.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The transfiguration. (b) The three apostles and Jesus after the transfiguration.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “And he was transfigured before them.” His body assumed a supernatural glory. Compare the following. “Moses,” as representative of the Law; “Elias,” as representative of the prophets. The first had taken the semblance of a body, the latter appeared in his natural body. “It is good for us to be here”; or, to live here, here we will remain. “Then a bright cloud overshadowed them,” Jesus, Moses and Elias. “And behold a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” This came from God, who was present in the cloud, as He once was present in the pillar of cloud guiding the Israelites. (b) “They were much afraid” when they heard God speaking, as He had spoken to the Israelites upon Sinai. “And Jesus came and touched them” in order to arouse them, as they lay prone upon the ground paralyzed with fear.

"Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead." Why only then? Because before that many would not have believed in this vision.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus True God.* In this event we see a threefold testimony to the divinity of Jesus: (a) The testimony of the heavenly Father. As at the baptism, the heavenly Father declared also at the transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son," etc. (b) Jesus' own testimony. By the Lord speaking of His future resurrection He gave proof of a divine attribute, omniscience. His divinity. (c) The testimony of the apostles. As eye and ear witnesses the three apostles announced, after the ascension of the Lord, that they had beheld the divine glory of Jesus. "And we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John i. 14). How is it again proved that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is true God? What is the heavenly Father's testimony? What is the testimony of Christ? What is the testimony of the apostles? 2. *Purpose of the Transfiguration.* We find later the same three apostles at the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives. Jesus had chosen to be transfigured before them in order that, by beholding His divine glory, their faith in His divinity might be so strengthened that later they would not doubt in Him when seeing Him in profound abasement in the Garden of Olives.

E. Moral Application.—As the Saviour's body was transfigured, so also will our bodies be transfigured at the resurrection of the dead on the last day. Keep, therefore, your body holy, and avoid defiling it in the very least by immodesty.

XL.—JESUS REQUIRES CHILDLIKE DISPOSITION AND WARNS AGAINST THE GIVING OF SCANDAL.

A. Preparation.—Jesus went with His disciples from Mount Thabor to Capharnaum. On the way the apostles disputed among themselves as to which of them was the greatest or best. At Capharnaum Jesus showed them how foolish their discussion had been. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) Instructing the apostles concerning childlike disposition. (b) Warning against scandal-giving.

C. Explanation.—(a) And when he was come into "the house"—Peter's house. "But they held their peace," because they were ashamed. And Jesus said: "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little

children," meaning as innocent and humble. "He that shall receive one such little child in my name"—that is to say, he who shall receive such a child for love of me, so as to take care of it—"receiveth me," meaning I will consider it as if done to myself, as if you had received me. "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones," tempt to sin. (b) "Wo to the world because of scandals," meaning wo to mankind on account of bad example and tempting to sin. "For it must needs be," etc., because sin has corrupted and dazzled mankind. "Nevertheless, wo to that man," etc., that is to say, that it will go hard with the seducer one day. "If, however, thy hand scandalize thee," etc., if any objects or persons should tempt you to sin—friend, associate, book, picture—get rid of them as quickly as possible, in order that your soul may not suffer harm, even if your friend should be as dear to you as your hand or your eye. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones—think them of little account. "I say to you, that their angels in heaven," meaning they are looked after by protecting angels, who are with God in heaven, and who will accuse you to Him.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Humility*. "Unless you become as little children," etc. No heaven except by humility. Humility is therefore an indispensable condition for entering into heaven. Indeed, without humility there is no true virtue. It is the foundation of all virtues. Humility consists in this: that in acknowledging our weakness and sinfulness we ascribe all good to God, depreciating ourselves. 2. *Scandal*. Those who lead others astray by bad example, or into sin by word and deed, give scandal. From the terrible "wo" which the Lord calls down upon the giver of scandal, we can understand that scandal-giving, seduction, must be great and heinous sins. The scandal-giver truly acts toward his fellow men devilish, inasmuch as, by tempting him to sin, he acts like the devil. He kills his neighbor's soul, robs him of supernatural life, of sanctifying grace, by leading him to sin. When do we injure our neighbor in the life of his soul? What ought to deter us particularly from giving scandal? 3. *The Guardian Angels*. The teaching of the guardian angels, which we already found in the Old Law among the Jews (Tobias), is now confirmed by the Lord Himself. "Their angels in heaven always see," etc. How are the good angels disposed toward us? What do we owe to our guardian angels? In honor of the holy guardian angels the Church celebrates a special festival, on the first Sunday in October.

E. *Moral Application*.—Beware of giving scandal to your brothers, sisters or playmates, of leading them into sin. The guardian angels of those to whom you give scandal will denounce you to God and demand His vengeance upon you!

XLI.—JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY, AND EXHORTS THEM TO PERSEVERING, COMMON PRAYER.

A. Preparation.—Jesus now remained for some time in Capharnaum and its vicinity. He liked particularly the mountains near the city, where He often retired for prayer (cf. XXII.). The apostles were often witnesses of the Saviour's devotion and fervor in His prayers, and they had great desire to pray as fervently as Jesus did. Hence, one day, they begged the Lord to teach them how to pray, and the Saviour complied with their request. We shall now hear about this.

B. Narration.—(a) The "Our Father." (b) Persevering prayer. (c) Common prayer.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Lord, teach us how to pray," meaning to pray well. "Our Father," etc. Jesus had taught them this prayer already (XXIII., v.). (b) "Seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," by means of devout and humble prayer. "Scorpion," a spider-like insect, in the tail of which there is a poisonous sting. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children," meaning if sinful men grant their children's petitions, how much more will God do so, "give the good Spirit to them that ask him," meaning the Holy Ghost, the dispenser of every grace. (c) "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," in order to honor and glorify me, "there am I in the midst of them," to listen to them.

D. Commentary.—*The Doctrine of Prayer.* At the disciples' petition the Lord taught them the "Our Father" (as in XXIII., v.), and now showed them how to pray. Besides praying with devotion and humility, we should pray: (a) With perseverance. The parable of the unfortunate friend, who did not cease to knock and to pray until the other arose and gave him what he asked for, should teach us to be persevering in taking our requests to our best Friend, to God, and to knock, by prayer, when we shall surely be heard. "The persevering prayer of the just man prevaieth much." When do we pray with perseverance? (b) We should pray with confidence. "Ask, and it shall be given to you." As the Son of God teaches us, we ought to pray to God with childlike confidence that we shall be heard. Nevertheless, when God, the omniscient, foresees that that for which we ask will be harmful for us, then He refuses it to us, just as a father would not give anything useless or injurious to his child who asks for it. Why do we not always receive what

we ask for? 3. We should pray in common. "If two of you shall agree upon earth." There is more probability, therefore, of common prayer being heard than the prayer of the individual. God can not resist such a storm of prayer, as it were (devotion in common at home and in the church).

E. *Moral Application*.—Pray always devoutly. God detests a prayer from the lips only. When you pray, do so with devotion, humility, confidence and perseverance, and leave it to God when and whether He will grant it.

XLII.—THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.

A. *Preparation*.—While the Lord still sojourned at Capharnaum, he preached the parable of the unforgiving servant.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The merciful king. (b) The unforgiving servant. (c) The lesson of this parable.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Peter asked Jesus: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me and I forgive him?"—my neighbor. Jesus answered: "Till seventy times seven"; that means numberless times. A servant was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents. As he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and also his wife and children, for this was according to the Roman law. (b) This servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence, "and laying hold of him he throttled him (choked him), saying: Pay what thou owest." He cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. When the lord heard of this he was angry, and "delivered the unmerciful servant to the torturers until he should pay all the debt." Now, as he could impossibly pay because the debt was so large, that unmerciful servant had to remain in prison for the rest of his time.

D. *Occasion*.—The Saviour had before spoken of the obligation to forgive, to be reconciled (cf. XXXVIII.). Peter now put the question to the Lord, as referring to this instruction, as to *how often* we should forgive our neighbor? For his instruction Jesus delivered the parable as above.

E. *Commentary*.—*The King is God*. The servant who owed the ten thousand talents is the sinner who, by his sins (offenses to the infinite God), has incurred an infinite debt which he, of his own power, will never be able to pay. If, however, the sinner acknowledges his guilt and contritely begs pardon of God, then God remits to him his whole debt, provided the sinner shows a like compassion

toward fellow men who have offended him. What do you mean by saying "God is merciful"? That servant who owed the other a hundred pence is like to the man who offends his neighbor. The sinner should remit to his neighbor this trifling debt, so small in comparison to his own debt (to God); he should cheerfully forgive the offenses which his neighbor has committed against him, otherwise he will not receive pardon of his sins from God. (The Spiritual Works of Mercy.)

F. *Further Development*.*—1. The fifth petition of the "Our Father": What do we ask for in the fifth petition? "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." 2. Sin is the greatest of all evils: Because sin, especially mortal sin, incurs for us an infinite debt and punishment, it must be shunned and feared by us as the greatest evil. Must we avoid grievous sins only? 3. The eternity of hell: "He delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all the debt." As the servant's indebtedness to his lord was so great that he could impossibly pay the same, he was therefore delivered to the torturers for the rest of his time. In the same way a soul damned for its debt of sins will be delivered to hell for the rest of its life, i. e., for all eternity, because the soul is immortal. Whence do we know that the punishments of the damned are everlasting? Why are the punishments of the damned everlasting?

G. *Moral Application*.—Forgive your neighbor willingly and quickly if he offends you. Never live at enmity with any one. Harmony and peace should rule between you and your brothers, sisters and schoolfellows. Just as you wish God to forgive you, so must you forgive your neighbor!

XLIII.—THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

A. *Preparation*.—The time of the Passion and death of Jesus was drawing near. Hence He betook Himself to Jerusalem, where His Passion was to begin. Upon the way thither a doctor of the law tested Him, whereupon Jesus delivered the following parable.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jesus and the doctor of the law. (b) The parable of the good Samaritan.

* For the higher classes.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Doctor of the law—student of the Scriptures. In order to test Jesus he asked: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" He wished to put Him to the test, to see whether His doctrine was false. "This do and thou shalt live"—eternal life. "But he, willing to justify himself," on account of his first question, therefore asked further: "Who is my neighbor?" He wished thereby to make it appear as if it was only about the idea "neighbor" that he wanted it made plain to him. (b) "A certain man," an Israelite, "went to Jericho," to the east of Jerusalem, "and fell among robbers." Even to this day that region is unsafe on account of robbers. "He poured oil" upon the bruises caused by the blows, so as to soothen the pain, "and wine" into the other wounds, so as to prevent festering. "Beast of burden"—mule or ass.

D. The doctor of law's question, "Who is my neighbor?" occasioned this parable.

E. *Commentary.*—The Jews regarded only their kind as neighbors in the sense of charity. Gentile and Samaritans were absolutely excluded from the charity of the Jews; indeed, they considered contact with them as defiling. But even among themselves their charity was not considerable, as shown in the parable. A priest and a Levite passed unfeelingly by the unfortunate man, a fellow Jew, although his case demanded prompt assistance. A Samaritan, one of the Samaritan people, toward whom the Jews were ill-disposed, finally took care of the injured man, although he recognized him as a Jew and enemy. The fundamental principle of this parable is: Every human being is our neighbor, including even our enemies, and no one must be excluded from our charity.

F. *Further Development.**—1. The qualities of charity: The Samaritan loved his neighbor (a) sincerely, inasmuch as he did to him as he wished done to himself in a similar position. When do we love our neighbor as ourself (therefore sincerely)? (b) He loved him unselfishly, by doing good to him for God's sake, not for approval or reward. He took care of the unfortunate man, who lay there alone and forsaken, completely stripped of his possessions, and who therefore was unable to reward his rescuer. When is our charity unselfish? (c) His charity was universal, because he did good to the sufferer, although an enemy of his. When is our charity universal? 2. The sins of the robbers: They had sinned (a) against the fifth and (b) against the seventh commandments. When do we sin against our neighbor's natural life? How do we commit sin by robbery or theft?

* For the higher classes.

G. *Moral Application*.—Bear in your heart compassion and sympathy for those in misfortune. Never exult maliciously if harm befalls your neighbor. This would be following the example of the devil.

XLIV.—MARTHA AND MARY.

A. *Preparation*.—On His way to Jerusalem Jesus came to Bethania, a small place to the east of Mount Olivet, where there dwelt two women, about whom we shall hear in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—

C. *Explanation*.—"And she had a sister called Mary," the same Mary we have already learned to know as Mary of Magdala. "She hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." With these words Jesus kindly wished to draw the busy Martha's attention to the fact that she was giving herself a great deal of unnecessary trouble in entertaining Him (the Lord) and His disciples, while only "one thing was necessary," namely, that which Mary was doing, who occupied herself with the teaching of Jesus, to the abandonment of everything earthly, and with absolute resignation of herself to God. This is the "best part" that shall not be taken away from Mary, because it will continue in the next world, as the occupation of the blessed.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *True Love of God*. While the good Samaritan was an example of perfect charity (love of our neighbor), the sisters Mary and Martha are types or figures of the true love of God. Both loved the Lord, but each showed that love in a different way: Martha by wishing to serve the Lord's natural needs in the best possible manner; Mary, on the contrary, by sitting at the Lord's feet attentively listening to His glorious words. We may learn from Martha to fulfill conscientiously the duties of our state of life and of our calling in a way pleasing to God; from Mary, on the other hand, to be solicitous for the salvation of our soul by praying and listening diligently to the word of God. What means must every Christian employ to attain perfection? 2. *The One Thing Necessary, Required by Every One, no Matter what his Station or Calling, is Solicitude for his Immortal Soul*. Save your soul! This is your first and most important lifework, by the doing of which you will also prove your true Christian self-love. To what end are we here upon earth? In what does Christian self-love consist?

E. Moral Application.—The saints frequently asked themselves: "What does it profit me for heaven?" St. Bernard asked himself often: "Bernard, for what purpose did you come into the world?" Imitate the saints' example, for in such a way you will care best for the salvation of your immortal soul!

XLV.—THE MAN BORN BLIND.

A. Preparation.—At the time that Jesus was staying in Bethania, the Feast of Tabernacles was close at hand, and the Lord accordingly betook Himself to the Temple at Jerusalem. During His stay in Jerusalem Jesus worked another great miracle, of which we shall be told in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) The healing of the man born blind. (b) Dissension among the Pharisees. (c) Testimony of the parents of the man healed. (d) Rejection of the man healed. (e) Jesus' testimony for His divinity and the faith of the man healed.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Jesus passing on his way" out of the Temple. "Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents?" The apostles considered the blindness of this unfortunate man to be a punishment for sin. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him"; that is to say, so that my divine omnipotence may reveal itself in him, for Jesus wished to heal him by a miracle. He made clay (a paste). This He spread upon his eyes—significant signs (ceremonies) whereby Jesus drew the attention of those present to the miracle which He was about to perform. "Siloe," between Moria and Sion. (b) "The Pharisees" of the high council, to whom the man who was healed made known the miracle that Jesus had performed. Some of them said: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" meaning if He were a sinner how could God grant Him the power to work miracles? (c) "The Jews would not believe that the man had been blind." To escape acknowledgment of this miracle the stubborn Pharisees took refuge in this subterfuge. The high council therefore "called the parents of him that was born blind." They, in fear of the Jews, said: "He is of age, ask himself." They deprived themselves thereby, from fear of the high council, of testifying for Jesus to avoid persecution of the Pharisees, who hated all those who confessed Jesus to be the Son of God. (d) "How he now seeth, we know not;" they might have known, when Jesus had given so many undeniable proofs of His divinity, but their hatred and their aversion of Jesus prevented better knowledge from dawning in them. "Unless this man were of God, He could not do anything," meaning could not work such great miracles. The high council was thereby utterly confounded. In their impotent wrath the Pharisees knew no better than to reject and revile the man healed. "Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost

thou teach us?" They, too, looked upon his former blindness as a consequence (punishment) of sin. "And they cast him out"—out of the synagogue and out of Judaism. (e) "Jesus met him" intentionally, so as to console him, and to receive the rejected one into the kingdom of God.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. (a) His own testimony. With His own words Jesus declared Himself the Son of God. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" "Thou has seen him, and it is he who talketh with thee." What is Christ's testimony? (b) Proof of the truth of His words. Jesus gave proof of the truth of His testimony through that great miracle, whereby He gave sight not to a man who had become blind during life, but to a man born blind (without eyes). Justly, therefore, did the man who was healed declare: "So long as the world is, it has not yet been heard that any one has opened the eyes of one born blind." 2. *Resistance to Divine Grace*. Jesus again offered His grace to the stubborn Pharisees. They could not deny the miracle of the healing of a man born blind, although they tried in vain to dispute it. And still they would not believe in Jesus! Can man resist grace? 3. *Faithful Co-operation with Grace*. In contrast to the stubborn Pharisees, the man who was healed faithfully co-operated with divine grace. Filled with gratitude for his cure, he went immediately before the high council and gave testimony to the divinity of Jesus. Indeed, when he perceived how the Pharisees, from hatred and envy toward Jesus, sought to deny the evident miracle and to represent Jesus as a sinner, he expressed the conviction, unmindful of any consequences of his voluntary statement, that Jesus, who could work such a miracle, could only be "of God." When reprimanded by the high council and cast out of Judaism, Jesus gave him better instead, by receiving him into the kingdom of God. What must man do, on his part, in order that the grace of salvation may be bestowed upon him?

E. *Moral Application*.—In every temptation God gives you the grace necessary to resist evil. If you sin, nevertheless, then you resist divine grace. The oftener you do this, the more God withdraws His other graces from you, and you will gradually arrive in a state of spiritual blindness. Beware, therefore, of receiving God's grace in vain.

XLVI.—JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

A. *Preparation*.—After healing the man born blind, Jesus remained at Jerusalem and taught the people. Among other things, He told them the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The good shepherd. (b) The parable of the lost sheep.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "The hireling," to whom the sheep do not belong, who is only hired as shepherd. "And other sheep I have that are not of this fold," etc., namely, the heathen. "Them also I must bring," into my sheepfold, meaning into the Church. (b) "Now the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him." "What man among you, that hath a hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert," meaning in a sterile region where the grass grows sparsely. "And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing," so as to carry it back to the flock. "There shall be joy in heaven," namely, of God and the angels.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus the Good Shepherd*. Jesus is, in fact, the good, the best shepherd. His love for mankind went so far that He even sacrificed His life for them upon the cross. His pastoral love embraced all sheep, all men, not only Jews but Gentiles as well. He knows His sheep well; that is to say, He knows all their desires and needs of body and soul. He continually leads new sheep into His sheepfold, into the Church, as, through the missionaries, He gains thousands of souls yearly for the true faith. 2. *The Parable of the Lost Sheep*. (a) This parable was occasioned by the reproach of the Pharisees: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." (b) As a good shepherd goes after the lost sheep and seeks till he finds it, so does the Saviour go after the sinner and seeks him, by His grace, so as to lead him back to the right path. As a good shepherd rejoices when he recovers the lost sheep, so greatly missed, and as, in his joy, he quickly carries it back to the flock, and relates the news to his friends, so that they may participate in his gladness, so, too, Jesus rejoices when the sinner is reclaimed at last and brought back into His Church, and in heaven the angels and saints participate in His joy. 3. *The True Church of Jesus*. Jesus has given in this Biblical story two noteworthy marks of His Church. He speaks of a sheepfold. There is, accordingly, only

one sheepfold, only *one* Church under *one* Shepherd, or head. The true Church must be *one*, accordingly. Furthermore, the Saviour says that into this one and only Church He will lead other sheep, namely, the heathen. So that the Church is not only for the Jews, but for the heathen as well; founded, therefore, for all nations, and consequently "universal," or catholic. Which is the true Church founded by Christ? Is the Roman Catholic Church *one*? Is it universal or catholic?

E. *Moral Application*.—Jesus embraces also you with fervent love. Whenever you have strayed away from Him He has followed with His grace to call you to penance. Love awakens love. Give proof of this, by never separating yourselves, by grievous sin, from the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

XLVII.—THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

A. *Preparation*.—During His sojourn at Jerusalem, for the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus related the following parable of the prodigal son.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The going astray. (b) The return. (c) The reception. (d) The murmuring of the elder son.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me," namely, that which I should inherit at your death. "And he went abroad into a far country," in order to be free from his father's supervision, that he might lead a life of unbridled license. "And he wasted his substance by living riotously," meaning by intemperance in eating, drinking and by feasting with disreputable persons. "And he began to want for food." He went to a farm to feed the swine. To what a depth had the prodigal son fallen! He was made to perform the lowest services in order to gain a living. (b) He entered into himself, he reflected how formerly he had lived well in his father's house, and how miserable his present state was, and he wished that he had never left his father. He repented of his deed and made resolution to return to his father. "Father, I have sinned." He wished to acknowledge his guilt "against heaven," against God, "and before thee." "Make me as one of thy hired servants," meaning I will willingly do the work of a hired man if you will only forgive me and receive me once more. "And rising up he went to his father"; that is to say, he carried out his resolution. "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him," because he had daily expected his son's return and had scanned the horizon for him from an elevated spot. "The father was moved with compassion" at the sad condition of his son, who hesitatingly approached in rags and wofully changed. (d) The father, coming out, began to entreat the elder son, who was angry, to enter the house. "Thou hast even killed for him the fatted

calf." The elder son thereby reproached his father because he had shown to the younger brother so much affection. "Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine." The father sought to pacify the elder son by telling him how much better his life had been than that of his brother, who had suffered much want, misery and hunger.

D. The occasion for this parable was the same as that of the foregoing parable of the lost sheep.

E. *Commentary.*—This parable describes, in the figure of the prodigal son, the pitiful plight of the sinner, also his return and reconciliation with God. The father is God, the elder son is the just man, the younger is the sinner.* 1. *The Going Astray.* The separation of man from God begins with the evil desire to live free from the constraint of the commandments, according to one's own sinful tastes and pleasures; one becomes more and more lukewarm in prayer and at divine worship, and finally frees himself from God by a grievous sin. Far from God, in so much as he does not think of God any more, the sinner falls deeper and deeper into misery. He wastes his inheritance, natural and supernatural gifts, by sacrificing his health, the powers of his soul and body, his peace of conscience, heaven, merits, etc. What are the consequences of mortal sin? The more frequently and grievously the sinner transgresses God's commandments, the more he gets into Satan's power, who finally induces him to commit the most disgraceful and despicable sins. In Satan's service the sinner defiles and besmears his soul with numberless unclean (impure) ideas and desires, words and works, until at last the vices lose their charms for him and he perceives, perhaps too late, that it is "an evil and a bitter thing to have left the Lord his God" (Jer. ii., 19). 2. *The Return.* Then "he entered into himself"; the sinner compares his present condition with his former one, he examines his conscience. He sees that he has offended God heinously by his sins, lost His grace and love, forfeited heaven, and bartered it for the misery of sin. He yearns for the paternal house of God, he bitterly regrets to have separated himself from God and to have become so unutterably miserable. What do you mean by saying he examined his conscience? What is contrition? When is contrition supernatural? Confiding in his father's infinite goodness, the prodigal son made a firm resolve to return. So, too, should the sinner, upon realizing the magnitude of his guilt and of his offense against God, have a firm, confident hope

* By the elder son may also be understood the chosen people of Israel; by the younger, the Gentiles.

in the infinite mercy of God, who will not reject but graciously receive him. He, on his part, promises God to amend his life and sin no more. What must be united to contrition? What is the good resolution? The prodigal son made a good, earnest resolution. He was determined (a) to return, (b) to practise humility, as against his former pride ("I am not worthy," etc.), to atone, by hard work, for the wrong he had done. So must he, who makes a good resolution, be determined (a) to avoid, at least, all grievous sins; (b) to make use of the means necessary for the amendment of life; (c) to render satisfaction, etc. 3. *The Reception.* As the prodigal son knelt humbly before his father and contritely acknowledged his guilt, so, too, must the sinner confess his guilt with contrition. Why must we *confess* our sins in order to obtain remission of them? What is confession? How lovingly does the heavenly Father receive the sinner! He hastens to meet him, by bestowing upon him preventing grace; He gives him the kiss of peace, by granting peace to the soul of the sinner, so long deprived of it; the soul receives a new garment, the robe of sanctifying grace; a ring is put on his finger, meaning, God receives him again as child, as heir of heaven; shoes cover his feet: he receives many graces, besides, to walk with God, to lead a good life. Then God celebrates, with the sinner, the banquet of rejoicing—the grand banquet of Holy Communion. What graces are bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance?

F. *Moral Application.*—Take to heart the misery of the sinner, and avoid separating yourselves from God. The return is difficult and mortifying.

XLVIII.—THE PARABLE OF DIVES AND LAZARUS.

A. *Preparation.*—Jesus left Jerusalem again and went teaching through Judea. Upon one occasion He related the following parable to the people.

B. *Narration.*—The rich and the poor (a) in this life, (b) in the next.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) Jesus discourses concerning the right use of wealth, which consists in doing good by means of our riches. "The rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen"; his outer garments were of linen which came from Egypt. "Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores" (Lazarus), meaning that even the dogs annoyed and tormented him. (b) "The beggar

died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," meaning close to Abraham. "And the rich man also died, and was buried in hell." Note the expression! As the dead are laid away in the earth, so the glutton was laid away in the flames of hell. "Torture"—pain. Abraham speaks to Dives: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime"; meaning: you enjoyed life, and thus you have been rewarded for the little good you did. Lazarus is now comforted with the hope of the Redeemer and the heaven which He will open. The rich man begs Abraham to send and warn his five brothers, that they may not continue to live as heretofore. "Moses and the prophets"; that means the law and commandments of God made known through Moses and the prophets. "To hear"—to observe.

D. The occasion for this parable was offered by the ridicule and mockery of the Pharisees at the earnest exhortations of Jesus that they should employ earthly riches to do good with.

E. *Commentary*.—The fundamental principle of this parable is the following: The man who on earth makes bad use of his wealth, by employing it solely for the satisfaction of his sensual tastes, and who is hard-hearted toward the poor and needy, can expect only chastisement in the next world; he, however, who on earth is poor in possessions, in fact or in spirit, and bears his poverty with resignation to the will of God, will be abundantly compensated in the next world for his deprivations on earth. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

F. *Further Development*.*—1. The twelfth article of the creed: Clearly and distinctly Jesus teaches in this parable that not "everything is over" with death, but that there is a continuance of life after death, and a reckoning in the next life, where the good will enjoy eternal blessedness, where the wicked, however, will suffer everlasting torments. Which souls go to hell? What is the life of the damned in hell? What kind of life will the blessed enjoy in heaven? 2. Limbo and hell: Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom and there consoled with the hope of the Redeemer and the heaven which He was to open. Why were the souls of the departed just confined in limbo? Did Christ ascend alone into heaven? As a certain fact there is a hell, as this parable teaches, and this hell is a place of "torment," a terrible "fire," in the "flames" of which the damned will be completely buried, and in which they will suffer horribly, without any prospect of alleviation or deliverance. What is hell? How do we know that the punishment of the damned is eternal?

* For the higher classes.

G. *Moral Application*.—There are only two alternatives for you in the next world: either to be eternally happy or eternally unhappy. Choose! "In all thy works remember the last end; and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. vii. 40).

XLIX.—THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

A. *Preparation*.—At this same time (while Jesus still sojourned in Judea) Jesus related to the assembled Jews the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Occasion of the parable. (b) The parable.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "The Pharisee stood," in a place where every one could well see him, "praying thus to himself," that is to say, inwardly (softly or quietly): "I fast twice in the week," more than was commanded. "I give tithes of all I possess." The law required tithes of the produce of the fields, but the Pharisees gave also tithes of less valuable garden herbs, such as aniseed and cumin (cf. LX.). The Pharisee meant to say, "I do not commit grievous sins, and I do much good, more, indeed, than is commanded." "The publican stood afar off"; back of all the other worshippers. "He would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven," because, in consequence of his sins, he considered himself unworthy to do so. "But struck his breast," so as to punish (chastise) himself for his sins. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"—spare me, do not punish me! "This man went home justified"; that is to say, because of his humility he received the forgiveness of his sins.

D. The occasion for this parable is found in the fact that the Lord noticed among His listeners proud men who, because of the good that they had done, considered themselves perfect and just, and therefore despised their fellow men.

E. *Commentary*.—The chief thought of this parable is the following: "God resists the proud, but grants his grace to the humble;" which means that only the humble may expect to have their sins forgiven. The Saviour Himself expresses this idea in the concluding sentence: "For every one that exalteth himself (meaning, thinks highly of himself—the conceited, the proud man) "shall be humbled" (cast down, rejected by God), and "he that humbleth himself" (who thinks little of himself—the humble) "shall be exalted," (placed with the children of God). This parable offers a welcome opportunity for the contemplation of the meaning of pride and humility. 1. *Pride*. Its representative is the Pharisee,

(a) who exalted himself inordinately by considering himself better than all the rest of men; (b) who did not give God the honor due Him, for his so-called prayer was nothing but words of praise of himself; (c) who despised his neighbor, by considering his fellow men, especially the publican, to be robbers, etc. When do we sin by pride? 2. *Humility*. Its representative was the publican. Realizing his sinfulness, he regarded himself as unworthy to enter the Temple—that holy place consecrated to God. Hence he remained “afar off.” He struck his breast in order to punish himself, and had no other petition to bring to God but just this: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner!” Because he was humble, that is to say, felt his misery and sinfulness, and therefore looked upon himself as of no account, his prayer was heard, he went home justified; the proud Pharisee, on the contrary, did not. When do we pray humbly?

F. *Further Development*.*—1. False suspicion and rash judgment: The Pharisee, in his pride, not only despised his neighbor, but without good reason imputed evil to him; for he put down all his fellow men, especially the publican, as unjust, etc. How do we sin by false suspicion and rash judgment? 2. The good intention: All the good that the Pharisee did was worthless before God, because it was not accomplished from a love of God, but from pride. What does God regard especially in our good works? What is a good intention?

G. *Moral Application*.—If you consider yourselves better than your brothers, sisters and schoolmates, and if you are proud of your accomplishments, your clothes, or of being wealthier than others, then lay aside this bad notion. Remember that without the virtue of humility you can not be saved.

L.—JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN.

A. *Preparation*.—Jesus had a special love for children. They came gladly to the good Saviour, and mothers brought their infants that Jesus might bless them. The following story will tell us about this.

B. *Narration*.—

C. *Explanation*.—(a) “And he laid his hands upon them.” The laying on of hands is a sign of the bestowal of power and grace. The disciples did

* For the higher classes.

not want to let the children go to the Saviour because He was fatigued. They tried to send them away with harsh, rough words. "Forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," meaning it is for children and all those possessing childlike qualities (humility and innocence). "He took them in his arms," affectionately.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Lord's Love for Children.* Although the kind Saviour, in consequence of the exertions of the day, was much fatigued, still, when the mothers came with their children, He allowed Himself no rest. Affectionately He took the children in His arms, laid His hands upon them and blessed them. He bestowed upon them divine graces, in order that they might remain innocent. Jesus' great love of children was based upon the good qualities of the hearts of children. They were still free from sins, innocent, sincere and humble. 2. *The Divine Saviour's Blessing.* By the Saviour's blessing He granted to the children abundant grace for a devout and virtuous life. We receive similiar graces as often as we assist at benediction of the most blessed Sacrament (the blessings after the services on Sunday—Mass, Vespers, Benediction, etc.).

E. Moral Application.—If you wish to be cherished and loved by the Saviour, preserve the childlike virtues of humility and innocence.

LI.—THE DANGER OF RICHES. REWARD OF VOLUNTARY POVERTY.

A. Preparation.—One day a certain ruler came to the Lord to ask Him what he must do to possess eternal life. The Saviour availed Himself of this opportunity to give an instruction on the danger of riches, and upon the reward of voluntary poverty.

B. Narration.—(a) Christian perfection. (b) Danger of riches. (c) Reward of voluntary poverty.

C. Explanation.—(a) Which commandment? The ruler wished to know which was the most important commandment, hence this question. "What is still wanting to me?" namely, so as to become still better and more perfect. Jesus was gracious to the ruler, thereby manifesting His pleasure at the latter's striving after perfection. "Treasure in heaven," etc., meaning for such a sacrifice God will reward you abundantly in heaven. "He possessed great wealth," upon which he had so set his heart that he could not part with it. (b) Then Jesus spoke, after the ruler had departed: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And they that heard it wondered ex-

ceedingly, because they imagined that a rich man had so many ways of doing good, and could therefore merit heaven so much more easily than a poor man. Jesus wished to imply, by this comparison, that it was very difficult, indeed impossible, without God's grace and assistance, for a rich man to enter heaven. "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God," meaning the inborn love in man for money and possession makes it impossible for a rich man to be saved, yet with God's grace the rich man can detach himself from the inordinate love of earthly goods and thus be saved. (c) Peter said: "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee, what will become of us?" namely, in heaven what reward shall we receive for this? "Regeneration," that is to say, the resurrection. "And every one that hath left all things for my name's sake (for love of me) shall receive a hundredfold," etc.; here upon earth abundant graces, in the world to come eternal happiness. "But many that are first, shall be last: and the last shall be first." In a twofold sense: 1. Although you, as poor fishermen, account yourselves among the least, you will be the first in heaven. 2. Yet those who have received such a call can lose it, and those who are yet far from beginning may receive first place. So did Judas lose his rank, and Saul, the persecutor, became an apostle.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Faith Alone is Not Sufficient for Salvation.* From Jesus' answer, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," we perceive that faith alone is not sufficient to gain salvation. We must also live according to our faith; that is to say, avoid evil and do good works such as the faith prescribes. When is our faith lively? 2. *Christian Perfection.* The wealthy ruler had kept the commandments from his youth, but he wished to do more. Hence the Saviour advised him: "Wouldst thou be perfect," etc. May we content ourselves by only refraining from committing grievous sins? The Lord wished to counsel the ruler to detach himself from everything worldly, in order to serve God more perfectly. In what does Christian perfection consist? As a special means of attaining this perfection, the Lord recommends: (a) voluntary poverty ("go, sell . . . give it to the poor"), (b) perpetual chastity ("follow after me, the pure, innocent Lamb of God"), (c) entire obedience to a spiritual superior ("follow after me"). Which are further special means to attain perfection? Which are the "evangelical counsels"? 3. *Necessity of Grace.* The Lord's words, "With men this is impossible (meaning to be saved), but with God all things are possible," proves that we require God's grace in order to be saved. For as we are inclined "to evil from our youth," we can not keep the commandments by our own strength so as to be saved. Can we keep the commandments of our own strength?

E. *Moral Application*.—Put to yourselves the question of the wealthy ruler: What is still wanting to me? Which of the commandments do you most frequently transgress? Contrition and resolution.

LII.—THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.

A. *Preparation*.—In addition to the instructions imparted in the foregoing story, Jesus related to His disciples the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Engaging of the laborers. (b) Paying the hire.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "To hire laborers for his vineyard"—to engage them. "About the third hour," meaning about nine o'clock A. M. (b) "We have borne the burden of the day and the heats," meaning we have labored the whole day. "Take what is thine," meaning what is owing to you. I will also give to this last even as to thee," meaning the last shall be with the first in the kingdom of heaven, etc. "Many are called" to salvation, "but few chosen," meaning few comparatively, considering the great number called, are worthy and capable of receiving the full reward in heaven.

D. The occasion for this parable was the concluding sentence by Jesus in the foregoing story: "So shall the last be first, and the first last."

E. *Commentary*.—"The master of a family is God; the vineyard is the Church; the market-place the world; the steward is Jesus Christ; the laborers are the faithful (Christians); the working-day is the lifetime of man; the penny, eternal blessedness. The different hours of the working day are the different ages of life at which God calls men to work in His vineyard. He calls some early, when little children; others about the third hour, as boys and girls; others again at the sixth hour; and still more at the ninth and eleventh hours—that is to say, as adults, or in old age. At the end of the day's work (after death, therefore) each one who has rendered a ready obedience to the call of God, and labored diligently in His vineyard, receives the same reward, namely, heaven. The fundamental principle of this parable is the following: "Many who are the last will be the first," because, though they answered the call of God very late, still they worked with great zeal,

meaning, served God. "Many who are the first shall be the last," because they, although in God's service all their life, yet were lukewarm and idle, and guilty of gross negligence. Hence they will have to make long atonement in purgatory, and enter heaven later than those who, as it were, gained heaven by assault at a late period of their lives.

F. *Further Development.**—1. Christian hope: It is evident, from this parable, that no man, even if he has been pressed into God's service in old age, and had lived in sin, ought to despair. As long as he lives he may hope for the forgiveness of his sins and for heaven, if only he sincerely amends his life. What should we hope from God? What is hope? 2. Envy: "Is thy eye evil, because I am good?" When do we sin by envy?

G. *Moral Application.*—Labor diligently in the vineyard of the Lord; serve God by a conscientious observance of His commandments and by carefully avoiding sin! The laborers, it is true, who only came at the eleventh hour received the same reward as those at the first, but "because no man had hired them." You could not say this, for God calls you daily, through religious instruction, sermons, etc., to His service. Serve God with a cheerful spirit!

LIII.—JESUS AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

A. *Preparation.*—The approach of the festival of the dedication of the Temple (cf. O. T., LXII., II.) caused Jesus to return to Jerusalem, where, in plain words, He once more before the Pharisees testified to His divinity.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The Lord's testimony for His divinity. (b) The reproach of blasphemy. (c) Jesus refers to His works. The Lord's return.

C. *Explanation.*—"The Jews therefore came round about him," namely, the Scribes and Pharisees. "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense?" meaning will you leave us uncertain as to your person? "Jesus answered them: The works that I do in the name of my Father"—by virtue of my Father (God). "Give testimony of me," meaning of My divinity. "My sheep hear my voice," meaning you do not belong to the flock of my faithful. "No one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father"; that means no power on earth can separate them from me. (b) "The Jews then took up stones, to stone him," because, in their blindness, they regarded the plain testimony of Jesus for His divinity as a blasphemy. "For which of those works do you stone me?" meaning what evil have I done that you

*For the higher classes.

should want to stone me? (c) "But if I do the works of my Father, though you will not believe me, believe the works," meaning by reason of the works through which I have so often proved my divinity. (d) "They sought to take him, but he escaped out of their hands"—without their being able to prevent Him, as His omnipotence restrained them.

D. Commentary.—*Jesus True God.* In our story we find a threefold proof of Jesus' divinity, and it is: (a) In His words. He called God His Father, consequently He is the Son of God and true God. He gives to those, who believe in Him, life everlasting which only eternal God can give; and "no one," He goes on to say, "can snatch them out of my hand," because He possesses an exalted power, omnipotence, above all earthly power. Jesus finally and distinctly said: "I and my Father are one," namely, according to nature and essence as God. Jesus and the Father are two persons, but as God only one. (b) In His works. With reason Jesus appealed to His miracles as an infallible proof of His divinity. The man born blind who was cured had told the high council: "Unless this man were of God, he could not do anything." If, then, Jesus claimed to be God, and worked at the same time such miracles, He must have spoken the truth, and of a fact be He whom He pretended to be; for were He not the one He represented Himself to be, then He would have lied, and would have been a sinner. Yet, "How could a sinner work such miracles?" asked some of the better disposed Pharisees of one another. The miracle (or works) of Jesus are consequently a striking proof of His divinity. (c) In His holy life. Even the bitterest enemies of the Lord could not reproach Him with having done any evil. To His question, "For which of those works do you stone me?" they were obliged to answer, by their silence, that He had only done good, which is, accordingly, the testimony of Christ (for His divinity).

E. Moral Application.—The divine Saviour is your Redeemer also, because you belong, through holy Baptism, to His sheep. He will give you eternal life, and no power on earth can separate you from Him, if you yourself do not separate yourself from Him by mortal sin. Avoid, therefore, carefully every grievous sin, the greatest evil. Die rather than commit a grievous sin!

LIV.—VARIOUS SAYINGS OF JESUS.

A. Preparation.—Upon different occasions Jesus had uttered very instructive sayings, ten of which we shall quote in the following.

B. *Narration.*—

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “My doctrine,” that I announce to you, “is not mine” (meaning not discovered by me as man), “but proceeds from the Father”—a divine doctrine. “But from him that sent me”—the Father’s, therefore. “If any man will do the will of him, he shall know the doctrine whether it be from God, or whether I speak from myself as man.” (b) “Light of the world”; thus had Simeon already named Him. “If any man shall follow after me”—by living according to my doctrine. “Light of life,” eternal life, meaning to partake of eternal blessedness. (c) “He who would come after me, be my disciple, let him deny himself,” meaning suppress concupiscence in himself. “Let him take up his cross” (meaning cares and sufferings) “and follow me,” the divine cross-bearer. (d) “The foxes have holes,” in which they dwell. The Son of man hath not where to lay His head, to rest. (e) “He that loveth father or mother, brother or sister, more than me is not worthy of me,” meaning he is not worthy to be my disciple. (f) “He that loveth” his life, loves it inordinately, shall lose it. (g) The kingdom of heaven suffers violence; it must be gained by force, by straining every nerve. And only those who do it violence will carry it away, conquer it. (h) “What doth it profit,” etc., for eternity, for which, indeed, he is destined. “Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul,” meaning, having lost it man can not ransom it from perdition with the goods of the whole world. (i) “No one can come to me” (be my disciple) if God does not draw him by His grace. “Let him keep my words,” meaning live according to them. “Shall not see death,” namely, the eternal death of the damned. (j) “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavily burdened,” with earthly sufferings, trouble and sin. “I will refresh you,” with consolation and peace of soul. “My yoke” (meaning my service) “is sweet” (is not bitter), “and my burden is light”—what I impose upon you, what I ask of you.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus’ Doctrine is Divine.* Any one who faithfully lives according to it can experience this for himself. This doctrine renders those who live according to it virtuous, perfect and holy, as is proved by the numberless saints of the Catholic Church. “The tree is known by its fruit.” 2. *Jesus the Light of the World.* He has, in His doctrine, given us the answer to the most important questions, “whence” and “whither.” Those who believe in Him, and live in accordance with this belief, will not have lived in vain; their goal is set for them—the attaining of eternal happiness; the unbeliever, however, gropes about in the darkness. 3. *Following of Jesus.* He who would follow after Jesus, in order to be glorified with Him, must first of all resemble Him by self-denial and the carrying of the cross. The way of the cross (the way of suffering) is the way to heaven, the cross is the key of heaven. 4. *The Lord’s Pov-*

erty. It was great—greater than that of any man. They who would follow after Jesus must be poor in spirit. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” 5. *The Love of God Must, Above all Things, be Great.* We must be ready to lose father and mother, even our own life, rather than separate ourselves from God by grievous sin. When do we love God above all things? 6. *The Possession of Heaven is Worth Every Exertion.* He who would gain heaven must struggle against all temptations from within (evil desires and inclinations) and from without (tempters, occasions to sin), he must use violence, compel himself; for “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence,” etc. 7. *The Greatest Injury that a Man can Suffer, Injury to the Soul by Grievous Sin.* The soul is so exceedingly precious and valuable that if it should be lost by grievous sin it can not be replaced. What are the consequences of mortal sin? 8. *Necessity of Grace.* In order to gain Christ (upon earth by faith, in the hereafter in heaven) the grace of God is necessary; it “draws” men, by enlightening and impelling them to do good and to avoid evil. In what does actual grace consist? To what extent is actual grace necessary to us? What ought we to do in order to obtain the grace of salvation? 9. *With Jesus Alone in Consolation, Peace and Happiness.* “Come unto me,” etc.

E. *Moral Application.*—Follow Jesus faithfully and you will daily resemble Him more; cherish meekness, humility and innocence. Then you will be happy here and in the hereafter. Sin deprives us of peace of heart, of cheerfulness; it makes us morose, discontented, and, here and hereafter, unhappy.

LV.—THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

A. *Preparation.*—After the festival of the dedication of the Temple, Jesus had gone into the desert Juda, from there to the Jordan and to the country east of Jordan (Pera), where He taught the people who flocked to hear Him. A messenger sent by Martha and Mary of Bethania met him there, through whom they begged Him to cure their brother Lazarus, who was sick. We shall learn more about this in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Sickness and death of Lazarus. (b) Arrival of Jesus at Bethania and instructing of Martha. (c) Jesus greeted by Mary; walk to the grave. (d) The raising of Lazarus. (e) Effect of the miracle upon the Jews.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “Mary and Martha” (cf. XLIV.). “This sick-

ness is not unto death" (thus spoke the Lord, because he was going to raise Lazarus again) "but for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it"—by the miracle of raising the dead to life, so that many, recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, would praise God. "Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep" (cf. XXXI.: "The damsel is not dead, but only sleepeth"). The disciples thought Jesus spoke of ordinary sleep, which in severe illness is, as a rule, an auspicious symptom. "And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe," meaning believe more firmly that I am the Son of God. Witnessing the raising from the dead. (b) Martha said: "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Martha hoped and believed that Jesus, by His prayer, could raise Lazarus to life. "I am the resurrection and the life," etc. I have the power myself to raise Lazarus from the dead and make him live. "He that believeth in me, though he be dead, shall live," in heaven. "He that believeth shall not die for ever," meaning die in a spiritual way, be damned. (c) "Martha called Mary secretly," in order that Jesus' enemies who were present might not notice it. "And Jesus wept," in sympathy with the stricken sisters. (d) "Lord, by this time he stinketh." Lazarus had already begun to decompose. This thought made Martha lose confidence that her brother could be brought back to life. Jesus saith to her: "Did I not say to thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of the Lord?" meaning His omnipotence. "Because of the people who stand about have I said it," namely, the prayer of thanksgiving in order that the people should not be led to think that He brought Lazarus to life through the power of hell. (e) Jesus went into a retired country, near Jericho, out of His enemies' way, because the hour of His passion had not come.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus True God.* Jesus proves His divinity anew in this event. (a) He called Himself the "Son of God." "That the Son of God may be glorified by it." (b) He revealed a divine attribute, omniscience, by imparting to His disciples the news of Lazarus' death, although still far from Bethania. (c) He accepted Martha's confession. "Yea, Lord, I believe," etc. (d) He called God His Father: "Father, I give thee thanks," etc. (e) Finally, He raised to life Lazarus, who was already decomposing. 2. *Purpose of the Miracle.* The raising of Lazarus was one of the most significant of Jesus' miracles. The Lord worked this great miracle, shortly before His death, (a) on account of His disciples, who were once more made to realize His divinity and were strengthened in their belief in Him, so that they should not doubt Him when witnessing His wretchedness and defenselessness during His passion, and (b) on account of the Jews, to whom He wished to give another opportunity to recognize in Him the Messiah. 3. *The Eleventh Article of the Creed.* Martha's words, "I know that he

shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," manifest her belief in the resurrection of the dead. This faith was confirmed by Christ. How long does the body remain in the earth?

E. *Moral Application*.—Your body also will rise again! Take care that you never profane and dishonor it by sin, especially by sins against holy purity; so that you one day may rise from your grave with a glorified body.

LVI.—JESUS FORETELLS HIS PASSION. HE IS ANNOINTED BY MARY.

A. *Preparation*.—After the raising of Lazarus, the Lord went to Ephrem, a little town near the desert, from where He went north as far as the boundary line of Samaria and Galilee, and again proceeded south, by way of Jericho, to Bethania. The events of this journey we shall now learn.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jesus' prophecy concerning His passion. (b) Jesus at Jericho. (c) Jesus at Bethania.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "The festival of Easter" (Pasch), the fourth and last during the public life of Jesus. Jesus tells His apostles that He will be delivered up, handed over, to the Gentiles, namely, to the Roman governor Pilate and his soldiers. "They, however, understood none of these things," because they could not imagine why the innocent Jesus should be put to death. (b) "Simon the leper." He had formerly been a leper. Simon was related to Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Judas said: "Why was not this ointment sold and given to the poor?" "He was a thief"; that is to say, Judas had often appropriated money from the purse which the Lord had in common with His disciples. "For the poor you have always with you; but me you have not always." The Lord spoke thus, in view of His approaching death.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. We have two proofs for the divinity of Jesus in this story: (a) His omniscience. All things happened as Jesus had foretold them (prophesied), and as related in this story. He showed thereby a divine attribute, omniscience. Jesus had prophesied that He would be delivered to the high priests scribes; that by them he would be condemned to death; that He would be given over to the Gentiles; that He would be mocked, spit upon, scourged and crucified, and that He would rise again upon the third day; further, that Mary's good work would be announced throughout the whole world in the Gospel. (b) His omnipotence. Jesus gave proof of this by healing the blind man of Jericho. 2. *Avarice*. Judas loved money inordinately. When

do we sin by avarice? Avarice is a capital sin, from which many others proceed. The avaricious Judas stole money from the common purse; he was therefore a thief. He stinted the poor of their alms while professing to love them. "Why was not this ointment sold and given to the poor?" In truth, he was only anxious to get control of so large a sum of money, so that he might appropriate part of it for himself. In his unlimited avarice he later betrayed his own Lord and Master for money. What other sins, therefore, proceeded from Judas' avarice?

E. *Moral Application*.—Have you ever taken anything wrongfully from your brothers, sisters, schoolmates, parents or other persons (pencils, pens, fruit, money)? If you did, then you, too, have stolen, like wicked Judas. Return stolen property as quickly as possible, and make a resolution never again to be dishonest.

LVII.—JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

A. *Preparation*.—From Bethania Jesus took the road to Jerusalem, in order to make His triumphal entry into that city.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Sending of the disciples to Bethphage. (b) The Lord's triumphal procession. (c) Lamentation of Jesus over the city. (d) Entry into Jerusalem.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Bethphage," a market-place upon Mount Olivet. "You shall find the colt of an ass, upon which no man hath ever sat"; it had to be an animal of this description, because it was intended for the Messiah, and therefore must not have been used by any one before. (b) "On account of the festival"—Easter (Pasch). They cut down boughs from the trees and carried palm branches; the latter were regarded as tokens of gladness and rejoicing. As Jesus, the great miracle-worker, had become very popular with the people, they wished to prepare a triumphal entry for Him. "Hosanna!"—a joyful exclamation. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh"—meaning the Messiah, who was to be a descendent of David's; "Hosanna in the highest," namely, in heaven, where the angels shall join in the jubilation of the people. The chief priests and the scribes were moved with envy at this ovation of the people, and they wanted to restrain them; forbade them to take part in it. (c) Jesus went up to Mount Olivet with His disciples, whence He could see the city of Jerusalem. Jesus wept over it, saying: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day (meaning such an important day for thee), the things that are for thy peace (that is to say, that pertain to thy eternal salvation); but now they are hidden from thy eyes." "For the days shall come upon thee" (siege of the enemy).

And they shall "beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee" (the inhabitants). "Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation"—because thou hast not profited of the time of grace. (d) And the multitudes came forth to meet Him in the streets, in order to see the famous worker of miracles.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus the Promised Redeemer.* Even earlier (see XXXIV.) the Jews had wanted to make Him king. But then Jesus fled from them. Now, however, shortly before His passion and death, He permitted this homage, in order to reveal Himself before all the people as the promised Redeemer who, according to the words of the prophet Zacharias, was to make His entry into Jerusalem seated upon an ass, amid the acclamations of the people. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King will come to thee, the just and Saviour: he is poor and riding on a colt, the foal of an ass." This passage of Scripture was fulfilled by the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Consequently, He is the Redeemer promised by the prophets. Whence do we know that Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer? 2. *Jesus Son of God and True God.* This story again contains several proofs of Jesus' divinity. (a) He reveals divine attributes: Omniscience, by knowing of the ass's colt in the marketplace of Bethphage and by foretelling the future destruction of Jerusalem; omnipotence, by healing the blind and the lame in the Temple. (b) He applied to Himself a passage from the eighth Psalm, which treats of the praises of God. What is the testimony of Christ? 3. *The Tears of Jesus.* At the sight of Jerusalem, to which He would offer His grace for the last time, and which, as He foresaw, would again stubbornly shut itself out from the belief in Him. He wept (a) over the blindness and stubbornness of His people, who would one day be so heavily visited for it. His tears concerned (b) the awful destruction of Jerusalem, and, finally, (c) sinners, as Jerusalem, in her stubbornness, is an image of stubborn and impenitent sinners. 4. *Palm Sunday.* The blessing of the palms.

E. *Moral Application.*—Perhaps the Saviour's tears concerned also you! If in the past you have despised the salutary admonitions which your parents, teachers and spiritual advisers have bestowed upon you, then let the Lord's tears produce a change in you to-day. "Perceive in this day the things that are for thy peace!"

LVIII.—THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

A. *Preparation*.—On the following day Jesus left Bethania and went to Jerusalem, to the Temple. We shall now hear what He did there.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Purifying of the Temple. (b) The parable of the marriage feast.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "He purified it as he had done once before" (cf. XV.). (b) "The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being a king, who made a marriage for his son," meaning he gave a celebration in honor of his son's marriage. "And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come"; they despised the invitation. They were all occupied with different things, business, etc. "Go, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding," that all these preparations may not be in vain. The servants went into all the streets where wayfarers might be found in plenty. "The king saw a guest who had not on a wedding garment," although, according to Oriental custom, one had been handed to him. "He was silent," because he had no excuse.

D. The occasion for this parable was supplied by the stubbornness of the Jews, whom the Lord had so frequently called to the true faith by His teachings and miracles, they, however, not accepting His invitation.

E. *Commentary*.—The king is God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, the bride is the Church, the marriage is the spiritual union of Christ with His Church. Those first invited are the Jews, whom God invited through the prophets (later through John the Baptist). The "other servants" whom God thereupon sent forth are the apostles and disciples. But instead of obeying their call, those invited laid hands upon these divine messengers, maltreated them, even put them to death. Then God sent the Roman army, which destroyed their city (Jerusalem). After the Jews refused the invitation the heathen came, and still come, in great numbers, into the Church. At the end of time (on the last day) the Lord will appear, to inspect the guests. Those who wear not the wedding garment will be cast out into exterior darkness (hell). The lesson of this parable is a twofold one: In order to be members of the Church and participate in the joys of heaven you must not only (a) possess the true faith, but also (b) have on a wedding garment; that is to say, be in the state of sanctifying grace.

F. *Further Development.**—1. The king's marriage feast a type, or image, of Holy Communion: All Christians are invited to it, but many will not come. Worldly interests, earthly cares, hold them back. Those, however, who do come to this miraculous banquet, must be in the state of sanctifying grace. How would you receive unworthily? 2. Hell: Those who possess not the wedding garment (sanctifying grace) "will be cast out into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What is hell?

G. *Moral Application.*—God grant that you may never approach the table of the Lord unworthily. The frightful consequences of so doing are spiritual blindness, stubbornness of heart, often a death in sin, therefore, and final damnation.

LIX.—THE COIN OF TRIBUTE.

A. *Preparation.*—After the Saviour had related the foregoing parable, the Pharisees took counsel among each other as to how they might condemn Jesus to death. We shall hear in the following story about the plan they devised.

B. *Narration.*—

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words," meaning they wanted, if possible, to draw some kind of a word from the Lord by reason of which they might denounce Him. They sent to Him their disciples, who, like most of the Jews, were hostile to the Romans and to Herod. The answer to the question which they were to put to the Lord, would, they expected, cause discontent one way or the other. They said to Him: "Master, we know that thou teachest the way of God in truth," meaning the commandments of God. "That thou hast no respect of persons," meaning thou teachest without fear of man. "Is it allowed by God to give tribute to Cæsar?" that is to say, to the Roman emperor. "You hypocrites." Jesus knew that the Pharisees were not desirous for a solution of this question, but that they only wanted to injure Him, to lay a snare for Him. "Coin of the tribute," meaning the coin with which the tribute had to be paid. "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," meaning that which is due to either.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Hypocrisy.* The Pharisees pretended that they really wanted to learn the truth, while inwardly they were watching for the Lord's answer, so as to deliver the hated Jesus of

* For the higher classes.

Nazareth to judgment and death. When do we sin by hypocrisy? 2. *Obedience to Superiors.* As superiors have been ordained by God, in order to protect property and life of individuals, to uphold order and peace, and to let right and justice prevail, therefore we are in duty bound to faithfully obey them, and we must execute conscientiously the offices they require of us. This obligation Jesus Himself plainly taught with the words: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." To whom, besides our parents, do we owe respect, love and obedience? Why do we owe obedience to spiritual and temporal superiors?

E. *Moral Application.*—This story should fire you with a profound horror of hypocrisy. You can not deceive God. Always be sincere in word and deed, and remember, "No hypocrite shall come before God's presence" (Job xiii. 16).

LX.—THE GREATEST OF THE COMMANDMENTS. DENUNCIATION OF THE PHARISEES. THE WIDOW'S MITES.

A. *Preparation.*—In the last days before His death Jesus taught frequently in the Temple the most important principles of His doctrine, and warned the people against His adversaries, the Pharisees. We shall learn in the following story what Jesus especially taught in those days.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The greatest commandment. (b) Denunciation of the Pharisees. (c) The widow's mites.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him" (cf. LIX.), "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"—the most important. Jesus said to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind," and the other is like to this, just as important: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Upon these two commandments dependeth the law and the prophets," meaning that by observing these two we shall fulfill all the other commandments. (b) "Wo to you," meaning severe punishment awaits you. "Who pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin" (cf. XLIX.). "You blind guides," which means you want to be leaders of the people, although blinded yourselves you walk in false paths. "You are like to whited sepulchres." According to the custom of the Jews, the graves are whitewashed every year, so that they may be perceptible from a distance, and thereby be avoided, for to come in contact with graves was considered defiling. (c) The box for offerings, in the women's forecourt. "A certain poor widow cast in two brass mites," all she was possessed of.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *The Greatest Commandment.* This, ac-

cording to the Lord, is the commandment to love God and our neighbor. Whoever observes this commandment, will also fulfill, for the love of God and for his neighbor, all other commandments which define the obligations we have toward God, our neighbor and toward ourselves. Which is the chief commandment, that contains in itself all the others? What is charity? We must love God with all the powers and capabilities of our soul, because He is the supreme and most amiable God. Why do we love God above all things? The standard for the love of our neighbor is the self-love which is implanted in our hearts. What are we commanded to do by the commandment of brotherly love? Who is your neighbor? Ought the Christian to love also himself? In what does Christian self-love consist? 2. *The Good Intention.* That widow, who only dropped mites into the treasury, had given according to our Lord's words, more than others who had given much money. While the others "gave of their abundance," "the poor widow gave all she had," for the love of God. We can learn from this that God does not regard the size of the gift, but much more the disposition of heart, the good intention, the spirit in which it is given. What does God regard chiefly in our good works? What is a good intention? How may we quickly awaken a good intention?

E. *Moral Application.*—Bear in your hearts a love for your neighbor. Take care never to despise or ridicule others, for they are God's children, the same as yourself.

LXI.—PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD.

A. *Preparation.*—After the Saviour had extolled, before all His hearers, the self-sacrifice of that widow, He arose and left the Temple. He descended the mountain (Moria) upon which stood the Temple, passed through the valley watered by the brook of Cedron, and betook Himself to Mount Olivet, where, with His disciples, He seated Himself in view of the Temple. There He gave them a memorable prophecy, of which we shall hear more in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Prophecy concerning the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. (b) The destruction of Jerusalem. (c) The end of the world.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "His disciples said to Him: Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings." The disciples marveled at the mag-

nificance of the Temple building, which, built of colossal stones, seemed erected for eternity. Jesus answered: "Not a stone shall be left upon a stone," meaning this enormous edifice will be razed to the ground. "Tell us when shall these things be?" The disciples believed that such a destruction of the Temple would only take place at the end of the world. "You will have to answer before your judges. Then many shall be scandalized"; fall away from the faith and betray those who remain faithful. "But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved," meaning those who keep the faith steadfastly till death. The Gospel shall be preached to all, for a testimony, in order that none may excuse themselves at the judgment of being ignorant of the true faith. "And then shall the consummation come" the end of the world. (b) "Clothing," meaning clothing better than a laborer's dress. "Until the times of the nations shall be fulfilled," meaning until the heathen shall accept the true faith and enter the Church of Jesus. (c) "After that day," meaning after the destruction of Jerusalem, an uncertain, considerable time afterward. "The sun will lose its light," etc., because it will be darkened. "The powers of the heavens shall be moved," the firmament will be violently shaken and clothed in utter darkness. "The sign of the Son of man," the cross. "Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass (away) until all these things be done." "When you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors," that is to say the destruction of the world.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Destruction of Jerusalem.* Jesus' prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, was literally fulfilled, as history proves. (a) Signs. "Many shall come in my name," saying, "I am Christ." As a matter of fact, many false teachers (Christs) arose, who led numbers astray. About six years before the destruction of Jerusalem war, pestilence, famine and earthquakes devastated the country. "And then they shall put you to death." In the year A. D. 67 Peter and Paul died a martyr's death, many other Christians preceded and followed them in martyrdom. "When you shall see Jerusalem besieged by armies," etc. As a matter of history the Romans, under Vespasian, marched against Jerusalem with a powerful army, in order to subdue the rebellious Jews. The Christians, in obedience to the Lord's words: "then let those that are in Judea flee to the mountains," fled hastily out of Judea toward the city of Pella, in the province of East Jordan. (b) The end. Vespasian gave the command over to Titus, who surrounded Jerusalem. "Great tribulation" arose in the city, many died of hunger, until finally Titus carried the city by assault, in which many thousands "fell by the sword" while others (97,000) were led away captive into all nations to serve as slaves. Jerusalem was literally trodden down by the Gentiles, completely destroyed,

and of the magnificent Temple "no stone was left upon another."

2. *Jesus True God.* The precise fulfillment of this prophecy is a new proof for the divinity of Jesus, who thereby revealed a divine attribute, omniscience. Can you quote for me what Jesus prophesied? 3. *The End of the World.* That what Jesus prophesied concerning the end of the world will take place just as certainly as the end of Jerusalem, which He foretold. Enumerate the signs which will precede the end of the world (above, 1 (a)). What do the words mean: "Whence He shall come to judge both the living and the dead"? (Eleventh article of the creed).

E. *Moral Application.*—As uncertain as the time of the world's end, so uncertain is your end—death. You can make no better preparation for the uncertain hour of death than by carefully avoiding sin, by remaining God's children. Bear in mind the Saviour's exhortation: "Watch and pray always, in order that you may be found worthy . . . to stand before the Son of man."

LXII.—THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

A. *Preparation.*—As a sequel to the prophecy of the end of the world, the Saviour related to His disciples the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Expectation. (b) Coming of the bridegroom.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Coming" to the judgment. "Then the bridegroom came." At the end of the world the Son of man shall come for judgment, and the faithful will be in the position of the ten virgins. "They went forth to meet Him," to bring Him to the marriage feast. (b) "They trimmed their lamps," that is to say they put them in order, by filling them with oil from the vessels which they had brought with them. "Amen, I say to you I know you not," meaning I will have nothing to do with you. "Watch ye, therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour"—when the Lord shall come to call you.

D. *Occasion for the Parable.*—The divine Saviour had concluded His prophecy about the end of the world with the words: "Watch therefore and pray always," etc. In order to incite His disciples to a conscientious observance of this exhortation He related this parable, by which the disciples should perceive what a sad fate overtook those who did not hold themselves in readiness for the Lord's coming.

E. *Commentary*.—The bridegroom is Jesus Christ, the virgins who went forth to meet Him are the Christians, who should hold themselves in readiness for the coming of Jesus to judgment, the lamp is the emblem of faith, the oil signifies good works. The *wise* virgins, accordingly, are those Christians who live up to their faith and do good works; the *foolish* virgins, on the other hand, are the idle and lukewarm Christians. As the bridegroom, in our parable, came quite suddenly, so also will the end of the world, as well as the death of the individual, come unexpectedly, and Christ will take with Him the zealous souls to the heavenly marriage feast, but the idle and lukewarm will be rejected. The lesson of this parable is contained in the words: "Watch ye, therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour."

F. *Further Development*.^{*}—Lively Faith. From this parable it follows that only a living faith will open heaven for us. When is our faith a living one? The wise virgins not only possessed the "lamp of faith," but also the "oil of good works," for which reason they were considered worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven. Because the oil of good works was wanting, the foolish virgins were shut out from heaven. Hence it follows that good works are absolutely necessary for salvation. Is every one obliged to perform good works?

G. *Moral Application*.—Let the terrible fate of the foolish virgins be a warning for you. Be zealous in good. Assist at divine worship also on week-days, hear sermons, receive the holy Sacraments.

LXIII.—THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

A. *Preparation*.—While the disciples gathered around the Lord upon Mount Olivet were still reflecting upon what they had just heard, Jesus proceeded to relate to them another parable, the parable of the talents.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Giving of the talents. (b) Various uses of the same. (c) Return of the master and reckoning with the servants.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Then shall the kingdom of heaven," etc. "Talent," a sum of money amounting to about \$2,000. (b) "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," meaning take part in my happiness. "Out of thy own

^{*} For the higher classes.

mouth," etc., with thy own words. "My money"; that means the money confided to thee by me. "For to every one, that hath, shall be given"; that is to say, who has gained anything. "But from him that hath not," etc., meaning who has not gained anything, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away," in order to punish him for his slothfulness.

D. *Occasion for this Parable* (cf. LXII.).

E. *Commentary*.—The master, who, before setting out on his journey, gave all his goods to his servants, is Jesus Christ. The goods are the precious treasures and gifts of grace. We are the servants. The Lord bestows upon us different measures of grace, as the different number of the talents indicates; each one of us, however, receives sufficient for his salvation. The two servants who traded with their talents and gained others thereby are the Christians who co-operate faithfully with divine graces and gifts, and do good in the position where they are placed by divine providence. The slothful servant, on the contrary, is the Christian who does not make use of the gifts (understanding, health, fortune) and the graces granted him by God, who neglects the duties of his state and calling. The former receives heaven as a recompense, the latter is rejected and cast into hell, after being divested of everything, in death. The lesson of this parable is this: that, in order to be saved, we must diligently make use not only of our natural talents (abilities, possessions) for God's glory, but also of the supernatural graces (faith, sanctifying grace, actual grace, means of grace). God will require a strict accounting of the same.

F. *Moral Application*.—Accustom yourselves, from your earliest youth, to employ all the gifts and graces granted to you by God (time, health, etc.) for the glory and service of God. You will be greatly assisted in doing this if in everything that you do you make the intention, "all for the glory and love of God."

LXIV.—THE LAST JUDGMENT.

A. *Preparation*.—After the divine Saviour had frequently spoken, in the foregoing parables, of His ultimate returning for the judgment of men, He spoke also about this very judgment, held over all mankind, therefore over us as well, at the end of the world.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Separation of the good from the wicked. (b) Rewarding of the good. (c) Punishment of the wicked.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) “Throne of His glory,” meaning a splendid throne, judgment seat, suitable to the divine majesty. “Sheep,” meaning the good, while by the unruly, quarrelsome, and unclean “goats” are understood the wicked. “At the right hand,” because this side is considered a preference. (b) “Come, ye blessed of my Father,” etc., meaning you blessed of my Father take possession of the heaven which has been prepared for you as an abode from the beginning. “For I was hungry,” etc. That is the reason, therefore, why they are admitted into heaven. “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me”; that means the kindness that you showed to the poor and despised, is as if you had shown it me. (c) “Depart from me, out of my sight into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”; meaning the bad angels, who revolted with him against God.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus, Judge of the Universe*. What the divine Saviour had already previously said to the Jews (XXXVII., v.), “The Father judgeth no one, but hath transmitted the whole judgment to the Son.” This He now repeats. Jesus will return one day to judge. What do the words mean: “From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead”? 2. *The General Judgment*. All the nations of the earth will be assembled before him.” Hence this judgment is called the general, or universal, judgment. What is this judgment, at the end of the world, called? 3. *The Sentence*. (a) This will be according to each man’s works, especially with regard to the practising or omitting of the works of mercy. Is every one obliged to perform good works? The corporal and spiritual works of mercy.¹ (b) The sentence pronounced will be favorable to those who in their lives did good works, but unfavorable for the slothful, lukewarm Christians. What will be the sentence of the divine Judge? (c) It will be executed immediately. “These shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting.” What will take place after the judge’s verdict? 4. *Heaven and Hell* (cf. XXIV., D (c); XXIX., II. E (a) and (b); LVIII., F 2).

E. *Moral Application*.—Upon which side are you going to stand at judgment day? On the left, with the cursed of God, separated from father and mother, from brother and sister, damned forever in the awful abyss of hell? Oh, what a terrible thought! It should be in itself sufficient to make you live so that this unutterable misery may not befall you. Have God before your eyes every day of your life, and avoid falling into sin.

REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS,
FROM THE THIRD EASTER FESTIVAL TO THE
BEGINNING OF HIS PASSION AND DEATH.

1. Brief account of this period. Jesus in the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon (XXXVII.); at Cesarea Philippi (XXXVIII.); on Mount Thabor (XXXIX.); at Capharnaum (XL., XLI., XLII.); upon the way to Jerusalem (XLIII.); at Bethania (XLIV.); at Jerusalem, for the Feast of Tabernacles (XLV., XLVI., XLVII.); in Judea (XLVIII., XLIX., L., LI., LII.); at Jerusalem, for the festival of the dedication of the Temple (LIII.); in East Jordan and Bethania (LV.); at Ephrem, and on the borders of Galilee and Samaria; at Jericho and Bethania (LVI.); at Jerusalem and Bethania (LVII.). 2. Proofs for the divinity of Jesus. 3. Jesus the promised Redeemer. 4. Geographical questions.

THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS.

LXV.—NEGOTIATIONS OF THE BETRAYER. THE PASCHAL LAMB
AND THE WASHING OF THE FEET.

A. Preparation.—From the Mount of Olives, where the Saviour had instructed His disciples, He returned to Bethania, in order to pass the last hours, before His passion and death, in the family circle which had become so dear to him, that of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. For some time one of His apostles, Judas Iscariot, had entertained the thought of betraying his Master for money. Early in the morning of the first day of the unleavened bread (Thursday) he put his shameful plan into execution, while Peter and John were preparing the Paschal lamb, which Jesus was to eat with His disciples on the evening of this day. The following story will tell us about it.

B. Narration.—(a) Transaction of the betrayer. (b) The Paschal lamb. (c) The washing of the feet.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Judas had resolved to betray Jesus." "High priests," who, with the Pharisees and scribes, had resolved to take Jesus prisoner secretly and by cunning, and to put Him to death after the Easter festival. "What will you give me if I deliver him secretly?" "Thirty pieces of silver" (about \$17). This was according to the law the fine imposed for the killing of a slave. By this trifling sum they wished to express their contempt for Jesus. "Judas consented"; he agreed to the conditions. (b) Days of the "unleavened bread"; the seven days of the Easter festival were so called, as during these days only unleavened bread could be eaten. "Prepare the Paschal lamb" for the repast. Jesus decided to partake of it in the city (Jerusalem). "I will not drink from henceforth of this . . . till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," meaning I eat this prefigurative Paschal lamb with you to-day for the last time. For Jesus was soon to abolish this type, or figure, by the institution of the Holy Eucharist. In Holy Communion the Lord eats supper with us and we with Him. (c) And Peter said: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" meaning, thou, the Son of God, wilt do this for me, a sinful man. Jesus answered: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me." Simon Peter saith to him: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." "And you are clean from sin, but not all," excepting Judas. "You also ought to wash one another's feet"; that is to say, serve one another humbly.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Treason of Judas.* The high council of priests had decided to put the Lord to death, and they watched eagerly for an opportunity to take Jesus prisoner secretly and by force. Judas offered himself as the vile instrument for the

attaining of their purpose; he had long harbored the thought of treason. How did Judas reach this deplorable state? The chief cause was his avarice; his inordinate greed for money in which he repeatedly, dishonestly, indulged in, when he stole from the common purse of the Lord and His disciples, of which he had charge. The money offered for the betrayal of Jesus was so alluring to him that Judas was unable to resist the temptation, especially as he had lost his faith in Jesus, in consequence of his unhappy passion for money. When do we sin by avarice? 2. *Jesus True God.* He foresaw that His disciples would, in the city, meet a man with a pitcher of water. They were to follow that man, and in the house which he would enter they were to prepare the Paschal lamb. The disciples "found it as Jesus had told them." Jesus thereby revealed a divine attribute, omniscience; therefore His divinity. 3. *Motive of the Washing of the Feet.* The washing of the feet had a twofold meaning: (a) Jesus wished thereby to teach His disciples humility and charity. Upon one occasion they had quarreled among themselves as to who was the greater. By His humble action the Lord taught them again: "He who would be first, let him be the last, and the servant of all." (b) Jesus wished, by His own humiliation, to entirely cleanse the apostles in a mysterious way, and thus to prepare them to receive the Holy Eucharist. We may learn from this that only with a clean heart may we receive the Lord's body. What must we do, therefore, if we have committed a grievous sin? How must we prepare ourselves before receiving Holy Communion?

E. *Moral Application.*—Always be kind to your brothers, sisters and schoolmates, and render to them any little service in your power. Jesus, the Son of God, washed His disciples' feet! Let no service be too lowly, or beneath you, so that you may become more like your Saviour.

LXVI.—INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

A. *Preparation.*—The solemn moment of the last evening, before the beginning of His passion, had arrived. That which Jesus had once promised, in the synagogue at Capharnaum, He now gave to His disciples, namely, His sacred flesh and blood. We shall hear about this in the story following.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The mysterious institution. (b) The body. (c) The blood of the Lord.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “His hour,” meaning the hour of death. “Those who are in the world,” meaning those remaining behind; therefore the apostles and all faithful living in the world. “Until the consummation of the world.” (b) “In that night,” meaning on Thursday evening. “This is my body,” which I have in my hands (the bread) which shall be offered up for you, given in death (sacrificed). (c) “Therefrom,” from the chalice. “Blood of the New Testament,” meaning the blood through which the New Law was sealed, in a similar manner as Moses sealed the Old Law with the blood of oxen (see O. T., XXXIV.). “Do this,” that which I have just done. “In commemoration”—memory.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.* A year before His death the divine Saviour had promised, at Capharnaum (see XXXVI.): “The bread which I shall give you is my flesh for the life of the world,” and “My flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.” That which He promised then He now fulfilled at the Last Supper. Then Jesus took real “bread” in His sacred hands, and changed it by His almighty word (“This is my body”) into His most sacred body, and gave this to His disciples to eat, with the words: “Take ye, and eat.” He did likewise with the wine in the chalice, which He changed into His sacred blood (“This is my blood”), and handed it to the apostles to drink. To be sure, that which He gave the apostles to eat and drink did not look like flesh and blood. It retained the appearance of bread and wine; it looked, tasted and smelled like bread and wine. The apostles, nevertheless, did not doubt the truth of Jesus’ words, “This is my body,” etc., because they knew that Jesus Christ was God, who can neither deceive nor cheat. Jesus therefore gave to His apostles, on that memorable evening, His body and His blood as food of their souls; that is to say, He instituted the Holy Eucharist. What is the Holy Eucharist? Who instituted it? What happened to the bread and wine? What was still present after these works of Christ? What is understood by form, appearance? The miraculous power, to change bread and wine into the true body and true blood of Jesus Christ, our divine Saviour transmitted to the apostles and their successors, with the words: “Do this in commemoration of me.” Did Christ give His power to the apostles to change bread and wine into the true body and blood of Christ? To whom has this power been transmitted? 2. *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.* Since the divine Saviour said, at the Last Supper, “This is my body, which shall be offered up for you” (as sacrifice) and “This is my blood which shall be shed for you,” etc. He was therefore

really present in the forms of sacrificial bread and wine, and He gave to His apostles, as food, His sacrificial body and His sacrificial blood. He did, therefore, at that moment, in a mysterious manner, that which He was to accomplish the next day on the cross. Therefore, if His death upon the cross was a true sacrifice, so also is the Holy Eucharist. Hence it follows that Jesus instituted this most holy Sacrament to be a sacrifice at the same time. This we call the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ Himself celebrated the first holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper. He "took bread," gave thanks, blessed the offering, and said: "This is," etc. (consecration). "And gave to His disciples" (communion). What is the holy Sacrifice of the Mass? When did Christ institute the holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Which are the principal parts of the Mass? 3. *Holy Communion*. The apostles actually partook, at the Last Supper, of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; they received Holy Communion. What is Holy Communion? 4. *Figures (Types) and Promises of the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which are now Fulfilled*. (a) Figures, or types, of the Holy Eucharist: The Paschal lamb, the manna, the food of Elias, the miraculous multiplying of the loaves. (b) Of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass: The sacrifice of Melchisedech, the sacrifice of the Old Law. (c) Promise of the Holy Eucharist. Christ's words in the synagogue at Capharnaum, promise of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass by the prophet Malachias (see O. T., LXXXVII.).

E. Moral Application.—Your God and Saviour is present in the Holy Eucharist, but your Judge as well. Be very respectful, therefore, in the house of God; pray humbly and fervently to your hidden God. When you pass by a church say: "Praised and adored forever be Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament!"

LXVII.—JESUS FORETELLS THE TREASON OF JUDAS, THE DESERTION BY THE APOSTLES AND THE DENIAL OF ST. PETER.

A. Preparation.—Judas had partaken of the body and blood of Jesus, and had profaned this most Holy Sacrament by receiving it unworthily. So as to warn the unfortunate apostle once more, the Saviour foretold his treason, and also that the other apostles as well would grieve Him. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) Prediction of the treason. (b) Confusion of the apostles. (c) Announcement of the desertion of the apostles, and the denial of Peter.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) “Mystery of His body and blood,” meaning the Holy Eucharist, in which Jesus is present in a mysterious manner. “He was troubled in spirit”; that is to say, profoundly sorrowful in His soul, because Judas had profaned this most Holy Sacrament, would betray Him and be lost eternally. He assured them solemnly, in profound sorrow, that one of them would be guilty of heinous treason against Him. “He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish”—dipping bread into the dish filled with fruit juice, which stood in front of the Lord. As Judas sat just opposite the Lord, he steeped his bread in the same dish with Him. “As is written” (see O. T., LVIII., LXXVII.). (b) “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of the disciples, whom Jesus loved,” on account of his purity. He asked Jesus: “Lord, who is it?” Jesus dipped the bread and handed it to Judas. “And after the morsel” Satan entered into Judas and blinded him completely. Judas asked, in hypocrisy. Jesus spoke softly, in order to spare him shame before the other apostles. “And it was night,” outside, as well as in the heart of the unhappy apostle. (c) “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall all be scattered”; this passage is from the prophet Zacharias, meaning thereby that when the Redeemer (Shepherd) shall be slain (struck) His adherents (sheep) will scatter, discouraged and afraid. Jesus foretold therewith the flight of the apostles, who, this night, on His being taken prisoner, would lose faith in Him. He said to Peter: “Satan hath desired to have you,” from God, “that he may sift you as wheat.” Wheat is sifted to separate it from the chaff; the grains, being heavy, fall through the sieve. Thus Satan wished to “sift” the apostles, which means by great temptation he would try to shake their faith in Jesus. “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted from thy sins (denying the Lord) confirm thy brethren”—the other apostles.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *Jesus True God.* Shortly before His death Jesus gave another unmistakable proof of His divinity, by prophesying things to come, and thereby evincing divine omniscience. What did Jesus prophesy in this story? What do you mean by saying “God is omniscient”? 2. *Unworthy Communion.* Judas had, with a mortal sin upon his conscience (intending betrayal of the Lord), partaken of the body and blood of Jesus, and thus he received Holy Communion unworthily. This awful sacrilege resulted in “Satan entering into him,” that is to say, Judas became completely hardened and blinded. What sin does he commit who communicates unworthily? What are the consequences of receiving unworthily? 3. *Infallibility of the Pope.* Jesus assured Peter that He had Himself prayed for him, “so that his faith might not fail,” or falter. Peter should confirm his brethren in the faith—fortify them. For this Jesus promised Peter that he would always preserve the true faith, and watch over its purity in his brethren also; that he therefore would be infallible in faith. This

infallibility has been transmitted to the successors of Peter, for Satan's endeavors to sow the seed of unbelief and heresy will continue till the end of time. For this reason the Pope's decisions in matters of faith are infallible. Who is the successor of Peter? When is the Pope infallible? Why is the Pope infallible in these decisions?

E. Moral Application.—Judas was warned by the Lord, but heeded it not. Do not despise the exhortations which are given you at home by our parents and here in Sunday school, otherwise you will imitate Judas and go to perdition.

LXVIII.—FAREWELL WORDS AND PRAYER OF JESUS.

A. Preparation.—A profound sadness has seized upon the apostles. They were completely discouraged because they were to lose their Lord and Master. In order to encourage them, the Lord gave them a touching farewell discourse, and then prayed for them and for His Church. The following will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) The Lord's consoling words and promise of the Holy Spirit. (b) The walk to Mount Olivet. (c) The prayer.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Departure"—death. "Father's house," meaning in heaven. "Mansions"—places. "I will come again," at the last day, "and take you to myself," according to the body also. "And the way you know," through the commandments the Lord has given you. "The truth," which He has taught us. "Life" through the graces He dispenses. "No man cometh to the Father, but by me," meaning if he walks upon the path which I have pointed out, believes the truth that I have taught, and profited by the graces which I have merited. "Spirit of truth"—the Holy Ghost. In my name—for my sake. "Prince of this world," meaning the devil, who persecuted the Saviour through Judas. "Song of praise"—prayer of thanksgiving. (b) "Neither can you do anything if," etc., meaning you can not perform meritorious works if you do not remain united to me by sanctifying grace. "Without me," etc., meaning without my grace. "Will be cast out," etc.; that is to say, excluded from the number of God's children. Such an one dies spiritually. After death these spiritually dead will be gathered together and cast into hell fire, where they will burn, without ever being consumed. "This is my commandment which I gave first." "Oppression" in the world, on account of your faith; "but have confidence (take courage), for I have overcome the world," and will also help you to do so; ask for it only in my name! (c) "Father, the hour is come," meaning the beginning of my Passion and death. "Glorify thy Son," by the Resurrection. "That thy Son may glorify thee," through them who will accept the true faith. "That he may give life everlasting to all whom thou hast given him," by thy grace and the faith. "And this is life everlasting," meaning thereby we attain

eternal life. "I have glorified thee upon earth," by everything that I have done. "Work," meaning the Redemption. "And now glorify thou me, O Father," meaning restore to me that divine glory which I have possessed from the beginning. (The Saviour speaks here as man.) "I and the Father are one"—united. "I pray for them," meaning the apostles. "Through their words"—through the apostles' preaching. "That the world may recognize," etc., in their unity, that their faith is from God. "Where I am"—in heaven.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Holy Ghost*. "I will ask the Father," etc. The Holy Ghost accordingly proceeds from the Father. Shortly after that Christ said that the Comforter would be sent in His name. Consequently, the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son also. Yet, although he proceeds from the Father and from the Son, He has only one origin, for "I and the Father are one," said Christ. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the disciples, in order that He might teach them all things and remind them of everything that He had told them. And this spirit of truth was to remain with the apostles (and consequently with their successors) unto eternity. Now, if the spirit of truth is always with the Church, and if He "teaches," then the possibility of an error in theological dogma is absolutely precluded; that is to say, the teaching office of the Church is infallible. Who has assumed the infallibility of the Church's teaching office? 2. *Unity of the Church of Jesus*. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me, that they may be," etc. Jesus prays herewith for the unity in His Church. By this unity the true Church founded by Christ is to be recognized "Let them be perfectly united, in order that the world may know," etc. This true, united church is the Roman Catholic Church, of which St. Irenæus said: "Although dispersed over the whole universe, she faithfully preserves the announced doctrines of salvation, as if dwelling in one house, believing the same everywhere, as if she had one soul, teaching everywhere, conformable to it, as if she had one mouth." Is the Roman Catholic Church one? 3. *Necessity of Grace*. "Without me you can not do anything." Can we, of our own strength, keep the commandments and be saved? (IV.). What is understood by divine grace? 4. *Hell*. They shall be gathered together, thrown into the fire, and be burned (cf. XXIX., XLVIII., LVIII., LXIV.).

E. *Moral Application*.—We can not be saved of our own strength, but only through God's grace. Render yourselves worthy of grace by a devout life, especially through conscientious and fervent prayer.

LXIX.—JESUS ON MOUNT OLIVET.

A. Preparation.—After Jesus had finished His beautiful prayer, He proceeded through the valley that lays between the city and Mount Olivet, where the brook Cedron flows. The disciples silently followed, in the darkness, their Master, who took the direction of Mount Olivet. What took place there we shall now learn.

B. Narration.—(a) Walk to Mount Olivet. (b) Jesus' first prayer. (c) Exhortation to the apostles to watch. (d) Second and third prayer. The agony. (e) Approach of the betrayer.

C. Explanation.—(a) "After this"—after the prayer. "Sit you here till I go yonder and pray," that they might be witnesses of His agony, as they were once witnesses of His transfiguration. (b) "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," meaning I am in the death agony. "O my Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me." Passion and death is compared to a chalice that is filled with a bitter draught. (c) Jesus is sad because they were overcome by sleep. He said to Peter: "Could ye not watch one hour with me? "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak," meaning though your will is good, you are frail men; therefore pray, in order that you may keep the grace of God, and be preserved from falling into sin. (d) "Drops of blood." The quite extraordinary agony of Jesus pressed His blood through the pores of the skin, and mingling with the sweat of fear, ran down upon the ground. "And an angel came and ministered to him"; pointing out to Him the fruit of His Passion and death (the redemption of the world). (e) "Hands of sinners," meaning Jesus' enemies. "Rise, let us go," to meet the enemies.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus Suffered as Man.* His soul was sorrowful unto death. In His agony He shed a bloody sweat. His whole human nature revolted at the thought of the awful Passion and death which He was going to meet, and which, as God, He foresaw in all their details. For this reason timidity and discouragement fell upon Him, so that He prayed to His heavenly Father that this "chalice" might be taken from Him. All this proves clearly that Jesus suffered as *man*; for as God He was incapable of suffering and of fear. Did Jesus suffer as God or as man? After an angel had strengthened Him the Lord courageously approached His Passion. Was Jesus compelled to suffer death? 2. *Causes of the Agony.* The Lord struggled with a real death agony upon Mount Olivet. His sweat of blood trickled down to the ground and mingled with

the dust. His countenance was pale, His body trembled, His eyes glanced up to heaven for mercy. Never yet has a man endured an agony like unto the Lord's. And why? (a) Jesus foresaw every detail of His awful passion, He beheld the instruments of the passion and felt the unutterable pains which they would cause Him. (b) He saw the sins of the entire human race, their frightful number and magnitude; He had taken all these upon Himself, and His Sacred Heart was appalled at their awful corruption, which filled Him with unspeakable disgust and loathing. (c) He had the sad knowledge that, notwithstanding His great sufferings, and in spite of this infinite sacrifice, many would nevertheless be lost. This was the greatest sorrow to the Lord. Therefore He grieved, groaned and prayed in anguish and fear in sweat and blood. (1. Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary. The Agony in the Garden.) 3. *The Qualities of Prayer are Discernible in Jesus' Prayer.* Jesus prayed (a) with devotion; for this reason He went a stone's throw further, so as not to be disturbed in His prayers. He prayed (b) with humility, for He threw Himself down upon His face. (c) With confidence; this is evident from the word "Father," with which He begins His prayer. He prayed (d) with resignation to God's will, for He left it with God. "Not mine, but thy will be done." Finally, He prayed with perseverance, for He repeated the prayer three times.

E. *Moral Application.*—Bear in mind that the ugliness and shame of sin caused your Saviour, a bloody sweat. Flee sin! Promise the Saviour to avoid, at least, your favorite sin for love of Him.

LXX.—JESUS TAKEN PRISONER.

A. *Preparation.*—Immediately after the Last Supper Judas went to the enemies of Jesus, the high priests; who placed a number of men at his disposal, with whose aid Judas was to take Jesus prisoner. Just as Jesus prepared to go with the apostles, Judas and his men appeared. We shall now hear how he caused Jesus to be taken prisoner.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The kiss of Judas. (b) Jesus and the rabble. (c) Peter's resistance and flight of the disciples.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "He kissed Him." What insolence and hypocrisy! A kiss, that mark of friendship, love and esteem, was misused by the wicked Judas for betrayal. "Friend." Behold the love and meekness of the Lord! Even to the last moment He tried to bring the unhappy apostle

to the realization of his awful deed. (b) They "fell to the ground," in consequence of Jesus' omnipotence. Let these go their way—the apostles. (c) "Lord, shall we strike with the sword," and defend Thee? "Thinkest thou that I can not ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels?" How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled unless it be so done? The prophets had prophesied that the Redeemer would suffer and die. Jesus replaces and heals the servant's ear in an instant. "Peter followed afar off," from fear of being apprehended.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus True God.* When about to be taken prisoner Jesus proved His divinity in many ways. (a) He threw the crowd of enemies to the ground by the mere words: "I am he." (b) He healed instantly the ear of Malchus, which had been cut off, therefore worked a miracle. (c) He called God His Father. "Or thinkest thou," etc. Jesus' love and kindness. Truly the love and kindness of Jesus is incomprehensible and astonishing (a) toward Judas, whose abominable deed drew only from the Saviour the gentle word "Friend," etc. By this new proof of kindness the Lord wished to touch the unhappy apostle, and bring him to better sense. But Judas remained hardened to this proof of divine goodness and love. Can we resist grace? (b) Toward the apostles, as well, Jesus showed kindness and graciousness. The good Master was solicitous for their safety. He allowed Himself to be bound and dragged forth, but He requests freedom for His apostles. "Let these go their way." (c) Jesus likewise was kind to Malchus, by healing immediately his ear that had been cut off, although he was an enemy. Is it not sufficient if we abstain from taking revenge on our enemies?

E. Moral Application.—Learn of the Saviour to treat kindly such persons that are wicked and evil disposed, and to show them kindness whenever you can.

LXXI.—JESUS TAKEN BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIPHAS.

A. Preparation.—Maltreated by blows and kicks the blessed Saviour was taken from Mount Olivet to the city and presented to Annas, a former high priest and father-in-law of the high priest Caiphas, and then taken before the latter. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) Jesus before Annas. (b) Jesus before Caiphas and the high council. (c) The sentence of death.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Annas," a former high priest. Ever since the

Romans were lords of Judea, it frequently happened that they deposed high priests who became unpopular with them. (b) "Caiphas," with whom the high council was assembled about three o'clock at night. "They could not agree"; that is to say, they expressed various opinions concerning Jesus (cf. XV.). (c) "Jesus was silent." He considered it beneath His dignity to defend Himself before false witnesses. "I adjure thee," meaning I command thee, under oath, to speak the truth. Jesus said to him: "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven," namely to the judgment at the last day. "The high priest rent his garments," etc., in token of his anger and indignation at such blasphemy. "He is guilty of death," on account of the blasphemy.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. Under oath Jesus testified solemnly before the high council that He was the Son of God, although He knew that for this He would be condemned to death. This was so plain a testimony for His divinity that no one in the high council could have had any further doubts concerning the person of Jesus. Jesus sealed this testimony with His death. What is Christ's testimony? 2. *The False Testimony*. The witnesses procured by the high council testified falsely against Jesus. Against which commandment did they sin? What does God forbid by the eighth commandment? 3. *Envy*. Jesus took the oath before the council, and thereby taught us that it is permissible to swear? What is swearing? When do we sin by swearing? (cf. XXIII., III., *Commentary*).

E. *Moral Application*.—Beware of unnecessary oaths. Many people have the bad habit of saying "upon my soul," "by God," etc. This is a sin, hence you must never do it. It would be the very grievous sin of false swearing if an untruth would be so confirmed.

LXXII.—PETER DENIES JESUS.

A. *Preparation*.—Jesus had announced, at the Last Supper, that Peter would deny Him thrice in that same night, and this now actually came to pass. In the following story we shall hear how Peter did not want to know the Saviour, his Master.

B. *Narration*.—(a) First denial of Peter. (b) Second. (c) Third.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Peter sat by the fire in the hall, for it was cold"—a cold night in early spring. "Peter was afraid," because he supposed he would be made a prisoner, like his Master. (b) Peter asserted positively,

assured them. (c) Peter went again into the forecourt, out of curiosity, for the session of the court was nearly at an end. A kinsman of Malchus recognized Peter by his speech; that is to say, by his pronunciation of the language. "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?"—in Gethsemani. "And the Lord, turning, looked on Peter," so as to remind him of what He had said. ("This night," etc.) "And Peter went out and wept bitterly," meaning with contrition.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. That which the Lord foretold about Peter actually happened, exactly as the Lord had said it would. Hence it follows that Jesus is omniscient; therefore is God. 2. *Peter's Fall and the Causes Thereof*. Peter had sinned grievously against His Lord. He pretended that he did not know Him, asserted it repeatedly, and even confirmed his words by an oath. What sins, therefore, did Peter commit? What does lying mean? When do we sin by swearing? How came Peter to fall into so grievous a sin? (a) Peter had voluntarily sought the danger of sinning by betaking himself among Jesus' enemies. "He who loves the danger shall perish in it." (b) He possessed too much self-reliance. The Saviour had repeatedly warned him ("Satan hath desired to have you," "This very night," etc.). He had foretold his fall, but Peter, in his self-consciousness, considered this to be impossible. "Lord, if all should be scandalized," etc. In consequence, he had relaxed all vigilance over himself, although the Lord shortly before had warned him with the words: "Watch ye and pray," etc. 3. *Peter's Contrition*. Severe and great as was Peter's fall, his contrition was correspondingly great. When, by a glance of the Saviour, he became conscious of his sin, his repentance was so great that he shed bitter tears. A legend tells us that as often as Peter thereafter heard a cock crow he wept again, so that his cheeks became in the course of time furrowed from the tears. His sorrow for having denied His good Lord and Master, and thereby grievously offending Him, was overwhelming. What is contrition? What qualities must contrition have?

E. *Moral Application*.—Whenever you have committed a sin you have denied Jesus. If therefore you resembled Peter in sin, then follow his example also by sincere contrition (awaken contrition).

LXXIII.—JESUS IS MOCKED, AND LED AGAIN BEFORE THE HIGH COUNCIL. THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS.

A. Preparation.—The Saviour, after His condemnation, passed the remainder of that memorable night in the same court which Peter had just left weepingly. The servants who guarded Him did not permit the utterly exhausted Lord a moment's rest, but subjected Him to all kinds of cruel mockery and humiliation. Finally, the dawn of morning put an end to this shameful treatment. The high council assembled once more to pronounce sentence upon Jesus, as the one rendered during the night was not valid before the law. While Jesus was being sentenced the consciousness of guilt took possession of Judas and he despaired. The following story will treat of this.

B. Narration.—(a) The scoffing heaped upon the Lord. (b) Jesus before the high council. (c) Judas' despair.

C. Explanation.—(a) "They spat in His face." What vile abuse! "And they covered His face" with a cloth. (b) "As soon as it was day"; therefore in the early morning of Friday. "Pilate," the Roman governor who ruled over the land of Judea in the name of the Roman emperor. He had to sanction the death penalty. (c) "When Judas saw"—heard. His lust for money had so dazzled him that he had not before reflected upon the consequences of his treason, as he might have known that the high council would condemn Jesus to death. He brought back the money to the high priests, saying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." But they said: "What is that to us? Look thou to it," meaning the guilt is yours. "And he went and hanged himself with a halter," in despair.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus True God.* Jesus declares once more before the high council, clearly and distinctly, that He is the Son of God (cf. LXXI.). 2. *The Passion of Jesus.* After the agony in the garden the Lord's sufferings increased from hour to hour. Under abuse He was dragged into the city, led before the high council, and then, for the remainder of the night, delivered over to a rabble of rude soldiers. They derided the Lord, struck His sacred countenance, and uttered horrible blasphemies, which most sorely afflicted the Saviour. What David had prophesied of the Lord's passion, was here literally fulfilled: "I am a worm, and no man, mocked by men, and despised of the people." What did Jesus Christ suffer? 3. *Judas' Miserable End.* When Judas saw the result of his heinous crime he came to his senses. He confessed his guilt to the high

priests and Pharisees: ("I have sinned"), and asserted Jesus' innocence ("by betraying innocent blood"). He returned the "blood money" ("and casting down the pieces of silver,") etc. But there was wanting something very important and essential to his contrition and penance, namely the hope for pardon and the love of God as atonement for his sin. Judas despaired. What must necessarily be united to contrition? 4. *Self-murder*. In his despair Judas seized a halter and hanged himself. How do we sin against our own life?

E. *Moral Application*.—What an appalling example! What an awful lesson! Judas, one of the highly favored apostles, ends his career by self-murder (suicide). Let this be a warning to you. Restrain, now in your youth, the evil passions and desires that would incite you to sin and deliver you to despair.

LXXIV.—JESUS BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD.

A. *Preparation*.—Amid unspeakable humiliation and mockery Jesus was dragged to Pilate through the streets of Jerusalem, who, to the vexation of Jesus' enemies, ordained another examination of Jesus; he could find no evil in Him, and therefore sent Him to Herod. The following story relates this.

B. *Narration*.—Jesus (a) before Pilate; (b) before Herod.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) Pilate washed his hands because it was a pollution, Pilate being a pagan. "If he were not a malefactor," etc.; from this angry reply we may perceive the anger of the Jews because Pilate wanted to have Him again examined. Then Pilate said: "Take him you, and judge him according to your law." That was not enough for them, for according to the restrictions placed on them by the Romans they could not carry out the death sentence. "He stirreth up the people," etc. Although they had condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy, they did not now bring this accusation against Him. The punishment for blasphemy was death by stoning. In their hatred of Jesus they wished to let Him die the most agonizing and ignominious of deaths—by crucifixion. "I am a king," not the king of the Jews. "My kingdom is not of this world," meaning my kingdom is not a temporal, but a spiritual one. "That I should give testimony of the truth"—announce it. "Jesus of Galilee." He had spent His youth in Galilee. "Herod," prince of Galilee, who caused St. John to be beheaded. (b) "Jesus answered him not," because Herod was not worth an answer. Herod and the soldiers put upon Jesus a white garment as worn by those who sought office (candidates). Herod thereby desired to deride Jesus as a candidate for the king's throne. "That same day" Herod and Pilate became friends again, because Herod felt flattered at Pilate sending the Lord to him for judgment.

D. *Commentary*.—I. *Jesus' Passion*. Jesus was greatly ex-

hausted in consequence of ill-treatment and of the sleepless night. Nevertheless, He was dragged to Pilate, from there to Herod, and then back again. Those were painful journeys for the Lord. Before a heathen (Pilate) He, the Son of God, was made to give account of Himself, and again before the reprobate Herod. While walking through the streets He was continually exposed to abuse and insult. But Jesus bore all this with heavenly patience, without murmuring or complaining. What did Jesus suffer? 2. *Jesus a King*. Before Pilate the Lord declared: "Yes, I am a king, but my kingdom," etc. Jesus, despised and reviled, is a king, the King of kings. His kingdom is the greatest of all, namely, the Church, embracing all nations, all countries. His royal throne is at God's right hand, the cross is His sceptre. 3. *Calumny*. The false accusations against Jesus.

E. *Moral Application*.—Christ is your king also. Loyal subjects strive to please their king by obeying his laws. Do likewise to the Saviour, your king, by a strict observance of His commandments. Reflect this evening against which commandment you most frequently sin. Contrition. Resolution.

LXXV.—BARRABAS PREFERRED TO JESUS. JESUS SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS.

A. *Preparation*.—Arrayed in the garment of mockery, Jesus was again taken through the streets of Jerusalem to Pilate. On account of the festival of the Pasch (Easter) thousands of strangers from all parts of Palestine had arrived in the city; among them there were many who knew Jesus, having seen and heard Him before. How degrading this walk was to the Saviour. The following will inform us of what took place before Pilate.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Jesus and Barrabas. (b) The scourging and crowning with thorns.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) They preferred Barrabas to Jesus out of envy, because the Saviour had ingratiated Himself with the people. Pilate's wife, her name was Procla. "Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (that means do not you condemn Him). "For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on account of him," meaning a troubled dream, "wherein thou wast threatened with dreadful things if this innocent man should be condemned to death by thee." Pilate, as a matter of fact, was deposed soon after, and ended a life in banishment by suicide. It was customary for the Jews to release a prisoner at the time of the Pasch to commemorate the deliverance of their forefathers from the captivity of Egypt. (b) The death penalty. Barrabas had committed a crime deserving death. "I will have

Him chastised therefore," meaning let Him be scourged, although Jesus, as Pilate had just said, was guilty of no evil. Scourging was so severe a punishment that many died under it. Jesus was tied to a pillar, and then the executioners struck Him unmercifully upon His bare shoulders with switches and thongs tipped with iron knobs and spikes. "They tore off" His garments, tearing open the wounds. They put a purple mantle on Him, mocking Him as king. "Reed" for a sceptre. They struck Him with it upon the head, so that the spikes of the thorns were driven deep into His sacred head.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus' Passion*. What an amount of suffering did the innocent Saviour endure in Pilate's judgment hall. How degrading, in the first place, was the being paired with Barabas! Jesus the guiltless, pure, holy, placed on a level with the associate of murderers and thieves, and considered inferior to him. An exceedingly great humiliation for the Lord! Then the scourging. Only slaves and highwaymen, as a rule, were punished in this manner: the Son of God had to submit to such treatment. The executioners rained fearful blows upon the Lord's body, until, in a short while, it was one great mass of wounds, whence the blood flowed in streams upon the earth. The Second Sorrowful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Scourging at the Pillar.—When the Lord was released from the pillar He fell to the ground, faint from the loss of blood. He was dragged into the court house, to be there further tormented. The clothes which stuck to his wounded body were torn off, so that the wounds bled again. Then they placed a soiled garment of purple color on Him, set a crown of thorns upon His head, and struck Him upon the head with a reed. What unutterable pain must this treatment have caused the Lord. The Third Sorrowful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Crowning with Thorns.—Pilate was the cause of these sufferings of the Lord, as he should have set Him free, knowing Him to be innocent. Therefore we say, in the fourth article of the creed: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." 2. *Fulfilling of the Prophecies*. (a) David's: "I am a worm and no man" (see O. T., LVIII.). (b) Isaías: "There is no beauty and comeliness in him; he is despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows." (c) The Saviour's: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem" (Matt. xx. 18).

E. *Moral Application*.—Do you realize why the blessed Saviour took upon Himself those awful pains of the scourging and crowning with thorns? He did it on account of the impurity with which men soil their body and soul. Oh, flee this dreadful sin, which was the cause that your Saviour suffered such awful tortures.

LXXVI.—JESUS IS PRESENTED BEFORE THE PEOPLE AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

A. *Preparation.*—In the purple garment, crowned with thorns, His sacred countenance streaming with blood, the Lord was led before the populace. But the Jews were not moved to compassion by this pitiable sight. Their hatred had blinded them so that they now clamored for the Lord's death. The following story will tell us about it.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Jesus before the people. (b) The last examination. (c) Confirming the death sentence.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Behold the man," meaning what a much-suffering man. (b) The Jews said: "He made Himself the Son of God, and thereby blasphemed God." When Pilate heard this he feared the more. The Lord's supernatural meekness and patience, His suffering innocently, combined with the warning of his wife, had aroused the thought in Pilate that Jesus must be a superior being. When now he heard that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, Pilate was frightened. "Whence art thou"? meaning art thou from the earth or from heaven? Jesus answered: "Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above"—from God. "Friend of Cæsar." The Jews threatened Pilate that they would accuse him to the emperor if he did not condemn Jesus. From fear of losing the emperor's favor, Pilate pronounced the verdict. "It was about the third hour." According to our calculation of time this was nine o'clock in the morning. "Cæsar," the Roman emperor. (c) Pilate washed his hands, as a sign that he disclaimed responsibility for Jesus' death. "Look you to it"—you may be responsible for it. "His blood be upon us," meaning let the punishment come upon us.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Jesus' Innocence.* Although Pilate had again examined Jesus he could find no fault in Him. He had several times publicly declared the innocence of Jesus, and yet condemned Him to death. It was not only an unjust sentence, but also a cruel one, because crucifixion was the most painful death to which a criminal could lawfully be sentenced. 2. *The Blame for their Unjust Sentence upon Jesus Rested upon* (a) Pilate, who, as judge, should never have consented to condemn a man whose innocence he plainly recognized. He thereby participated in an unjust slaying. What does God forbid in the fifth commandment? (b) The Jews, who, blinded by hatred, demanded the death of Jesus. (c) All sinners, for whose sake Jesus had to undergo so

painful a death. 3. "*Behold the Man*"! Pitiably, indeed, must have been the sight of the disfigured Saviour! In a purple garment, crowned with thorns, the Saviour stood before His enemies. Blood trickled unceasingly from His sacred head down His face. Truly a touching spectacle!

E. *Moral Application*.—Keep this picture in your mind, of the Redeemer suffering for your sins, so that the sufferings of the Lord may be profoundly impressed upon you, and that, especially in time of temptation, this image may guard you against heaping further insult upon the Redeemer.

LXXVII.—JESUS IS CRUCIFIED.

A. *Preparation*.—The enemies of Jesus received Pilate's verdict, the sanction of the death sentence, with wild exultation. The Lord contemplated with compassion His blinded adversaries, then willingly accepted the heavy cross, and began His last walk to the place of execution, where He was to die. The following story will treat of this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The carrying of the cross. (b) The weeping women. (c) The crucifixion. (d) Dividing of Jesus' vestments.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "They stripped him of his garments," whereby the Lord's wounds were again torn open. "He carried the cross himself," notwithstanding His exceeding weakness. Calvary, the skullplace, so called because of its form, which resembles a human skull. "Cyrene," a town on the north coast of Africa. They forced Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross after Him, because Jesus was so enfeebled that they feared He might not live to reach the place of execution. Three times the Saviour fell beneath the burden of the cross. (b) "The days will come," full of fear and apprehension. The Saviour predicted the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. "For if in the green wood they do these things: what shall be done in the dry?" meaning, if I the just and innocent One must endure such sufferings, what will befall the unjust, the ungodly! (c) "They handed him a sponge soaked in vinegar, mixed with myrrh and gall," a bitter mixture which was given to the condemned to benumb their senses. "He refused," because it was His wish to suffer the agonies of the crucifixion in their fulness. "Superscription." It was written in Hebrew (the language of the Jews), Latin and Greek, the languages most in use there and then. "Write not: the king of the Jews; but that he said, I am the king of the Jews," because it was annoying for the Jews that one dying so ignominiously should be called their "king." Pilate answered: "What I have written, I have written"; it will remain so.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Passion of Jesus*. Although the divine Saviour was already very weak, they put the heavy cross upon His

shoulders. How must this burden have pressed upon the wounds caused by the scourging! Three times the Lord fell to the ground on the way to Calvary. What a spectacle for heaven and earth: the Son of God down in the dust of the roads! The Saviour would certainly have expired on the way had not Simon of Cyrene relieved Him of the burden. The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Carrying of the Cross.—When the Lord arrived at Mount Calvary, they tore the garments from His body, causing His sacred wounds to bleed for the third time. What great shame did the Lord feel in the uncovering of His sacred body? Then they threw Him roughly upon the cross lying on the ground, stretched His arms and legs, until hands and feet reached the places for the nails. Then the nailing began. The nails were cruelly driven through hands and feet with strokes of the hammer. Every blow must have caused the Saviour unspeakable agony, causing His whole body to quiver. Then the cross was set up and fastened in the ground with earth and stones. During all this the Lord's entire body was rudely shaken, and the holes made by the nails in hands and feet were torn wider. Thus the divine Saviour hung between heaven and earth, as mediator between God and man. We commemorate this in the Fifth Mystery of the Rosary: Who for us was crucified.—Upon the cross Jesus now concluded the great work of redemption. The cross, which had been an emblem of ignominy and shame, now became a token of honor and glory. Through this sign the Christian confesses his faith. By what sign does the Catholic Christian profess his faith? 2. *Fulfilling of the Prophecies.* (a) David's: "They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they have cast lots." (See O. T., LVIII.) (b) Isaías: "He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer." (See O. T., LXXVII.) (c) The Saviour's: "They shall crucify Him." (See N. T., LVI.) (d) Devotion of the Way of the Cross. Of how many stations does the Way of the Cross consist? What are the single stations called?

E. *Moral Application.*—In order to put before yourselves the Lord's passion, make the Way of the Cross often and devoutly. Reflect that Jesus suffered all this for you as well, and be grateful to Him for it by zealously fleeing from sin. On account of sin the

Saviour was nailed to the cross. Carry the small crosses that God lays upon you cheerfully, for the love and in imitation of your crucified Redeemer. "He who will be my disciple, let him take up his cross."

LXXVIII.—THE SEVEN LAST WORDS AND DEATH OF JESUS.

A. *Preparation*.—For three long hours of torture the loving Saviour hung upon the cross, while beneath Him the populace moved about in excitement. Even upon the cross, Jesus was solicitous for all, including His enemies. We shall hear in the following story what He said upon the cross and how at last He died.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The seven last words of Jesus. (b) The miraculous happenings at His death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Thou who destroyed the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thy own self!" If you were able to do that, then you could save yourself now. But Jesus, not being offended, even "prayed" for them. (b) "And one of the robbers blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us"—by a miracle. But the other rebuked him, saying: "Neither dost thou fear God"; like the ungodly scoffers beneath the cross. And he said to Jesus: "Lord, remember me, when thou shalt come into thy kingdom." The thief upon the right believed, therefore, in the divinity of Jesus, and begged Jesus to graciously remember him when returning to His celestial kingdom. "Paradise," meaning here Limbo, which, through the appearing of the divine Saviour, would be converted into paradise. (c) "There stood at the foot of the cross the disciple whom Jesus loved"—specially loved (John). "Woman, behold thy son," meaning may John be a son to thee in the future. "Behold thy mother"; that is to say, thou shalt look upon Mary in the future as thy mother. Love her and care for her. (d) "The sixth hour"; twelve o'clock noon, according to our time. From then until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the earth; that means until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then Jesus cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—why dost thou withdraw consolation from me? (e) "I thirst." In consequence of the fever caused by His wounds, an unbearable thirst tormented Him. "It is consummated," namely, the great work of the redemption. And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, with the last of His remaining strength: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"—I surrender my soul. (f) "The veil of the temple was rent," separating the "holy of holies" from the "holiest." The rocks were split asunder in the vicinity of Mount Calvary. "The bodies of the saints arose from their graves"; that means the bodies of the just and pious people. "And the people were greatly afraid," seeing these marvelous signs, and they struck their breasts repentantly. "And they went their way in silence," in deep thought.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Seven Last Words*. (a) The first

word: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Although unjustly condemned by these people, derided and mocked by them, even now, upon the cross, the Lord uttered no word of reproach or censure, but forgave them, and begged His heavenly Father to pardon them. Jesus, who had Himself given the "new commandment of the love of our neighbor, also fulfilled this commandment most perfectly. Why must we love our neighbor? (b) The second word. "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." What consoling words for the penitent thief. Jesus, by virtue of His grace, had conquered the thief's heart, and he recognized the divinity of Jesus by His truly heavenly patience and meekness; he believed in Him. Hope was soon added to faith ("Lord, remember me") and love of Jesus, whom he sought to protect from the blasphemies of the other thief. From love there arose contrition and the confession of his guilt, for which he was ready to render satisfaction and atonement by the sacrifice of his life. (c) The third word. "Woman, behold," etc. After the Saviour had prayed for His enemies, and had pardoned the penitent sinner upon His right, He turned toward His mother and the beloved disciple, John. To the Blessed Virgin, the sorrowful Mother of God, He gave the virgin-like John as son, and to him Mary as mother. Mary needed protection, also consolation, in her inexpressible sorrow at the sufferings and death of her divine Son. Simeon's prophecy was now being fulfilled: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." What the blessed Mother of God underwent in those hours exceeded all the sufferings of the Christian martyrs. For this reason we call Mary, in the Litany of Loretto, the "queen of martyrs." As to John, so did Jesus give Mary also to us for Mother; for which reason we should love her with filial affection, and should confidently invoke her. Whom should we venerate above all angels and saints, and invoke with confidence? Why should we specially venerate and invoke Mary? (d) The fourth word. "My God, My God," etc. This outcry of the Lord makes known to us the magnitude of His sufferings. He not only experienced fearful sufferings in His body, but also His soul was tormented by an unspeakable wretchedness. (e) The fifth word. "I thirst." This word expresses, first of all, Jesus' natural desire to refresh His body consumed by fever. We recognize in that cry also the Lord's burning desire for the consummation of His passion, and for the salvation of the souls of all men. Many persons, however, hand Him,

instead of the consolation of true penance, only the vinegar and gall of sin. (f) The sixth word. "It is consummated." The difficult work of man's redemption was at last accomplished, the divine Redeemer having drained the bitter chalice of His passion to the dregs. The will of God is accomplished; all the prophecies and prototypes are fulfilled. (g) The seventh word. "Father, into thy hands," etc. With this final testimony for His divinity the Lord gave to His heavenly Father, to whom He had sacrificed everything, the last that He was possessed of, His immortal soul—His life! 2. *Jesus True God*. The proofs for His divinity are: (a) His own words ("Father, forgive," etc., and "Father, into thy hands," etc.). (b) The miraculous darkness at daytime. The people did not mourn at the death agony of the Son of God, but all nature sympathized. The sun, mourning, veiled its face. (c) "The tearing apart of the veil of the temple." (d) The quaking of the earth, which trembled in horror at the slaying of the Son of God. (e) The splitting asunder of the rocks and opening of the graves, whose dead were aroused from their repose by the crime committed against the Son of God. What happened at Jesus' death? 3. *Fulfilling* (a) of David's prophecy and of that of Isaias (LVIII., LXXVII.); (b) of the types of figures: Isaac, the Paschal lamb, the Brazen Serpent. 4. *Good Friday*.

E. Moral Application.—Jesus, by His painful death upon the cross, has obtained also for you the grace of a good death. Avoid sin with the assistance of divine grace. By sinning you crucify the Lord anew. Live so that you, too, may with confidence say at the hour of death: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

LXXIX.—THE OPENING OF JESUS' SIDE. HIS BURIAL.

A. Preparation.—Even the dead body of the Lord was not allowed to rest. A soldier pierced with a lance the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Then the sacred body of the Saviour was laid in the grave. The following story tells us about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Opening of Jesus' side. (b) The burial. (c) The watch at the grave.

C. Explanation.—(a) The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, by striking them with a club, to hasten their death. After the legs of criminals were broken, they were killed by a lance thrust in the breast. "They opened the side of Jesus," that is to say, pierced the heart, whence there flowed blood and water, a proof that death had taken place, as the blood immediately after

death disintegrates. (b) "Arimathea," northwest of Jerusalem (cf. XVI.) "Near the place," about seventy paces away. (c) "Error"—deception. The chief priests came to Pilate and asked that the grave might be guarded. Lest his disciples steal him away and say: "He is risen from the dead! so the last *error* shall be worse than the first," namely, that Jesus be the divine Redeemer.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Fifth Article of the Creed.* "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise," the Lord had said to the penitent thief. After death Jesus descended into Limbo in order to console the just of the Old Testament. By His appearance the soul of Jesus, to which His divinity is inseparably united, transformed Limbo into paradise. What do these words signify: "Descended into hell?" For what purpose did Jesus descend into Limbo? 2. *Jesus the True Paschal Lamb.* The bones of the paschal lamb of the Jews were not to be broken. Nor did this happen to Christ, the true Paschal Lamb. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs." 3. *The Divine Heart of Jesus.* By the spear thrust of that soldier the most Sacred Heart of Jesus was pierced. If any doubt had existed concerning Jesus' death, it was completely set at rest by the piercing of His most Sacred Heart; for that thrust was fatal. Thereby was opened the heart which has so loved men, and which even then still gave the last drops of blood for them. The magnitude of Jesus' love is admirable. For this reason the Sacred Heart of Jesus is devoutly venerated by all souls who love God. The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus takes place on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. 4. *The Holy Sepulchre on Good Friday and on Holy Saturday.*

E. *Moral Application.*—The Sacred Heart of Jesus has also loved you and loves you still. Never grieve this Heart by a premeditated sin. Say frequently: "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may love thee, ever more and more."

REVIEW OF THE BITTER PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS.

1. Short explanation of the events of this period.
2. Which prophecies and types of the Messiah have now been fulfilled?
3. Proofs for Jesus' divinity.

If there is a plan or picture of Jerusalem at hand, let the teacher show the children the places connected with the Lord's Passion.

GLORIFICATION OF JESUS.

LXXX.—THE RESURRECTION.

A. *Preparation*.—The sacred body of Jesus rested in the rock tomb from its sufferings. At dawn of the third day, however, It took life again. The Saviour rose gloriously from death. I will now tell you about it.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The resurrection. (b) The pious women at the tomb.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Upon the third day"—Sunday, therefore, He rose gloriously, meaning glorified. "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and, coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it, and his countenance was like lightning"—brilliant, radiant. "The guards" were struck with fear of him, and became as dead men. When they recovered they ran speedily to the city to inform the high priests of what had taken place. (b) "At the same time," that is, early in the morning, "Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that they might anoint Jesus"—embalm Him. Not finding His body, they became afraid, thinking the enemies of Jesus had removed it. Mary saw two angels in white in the sepulchre; their appearance was so bright and shining that she could not look upon them.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Resurrection of Jesus and its Significance*. On the third day the soul of Jesus reunited itself to the body, and Jesus rose gloriously from the dead (fifth article of the creed). Did the soul of Christ remain in Limbo? The First Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Resurrection.—The miracle of the Resurrection is of great significance for us: (a) Jesus Himself had repeatedly referred to this miracle as a proof of His divinity. "Destroy this temple," etc. (XV.). "The wicked and adulterous generation," etc. (XXVIII.). By His actual resurrection upon the third day He gave undeniable proof that He had spoken the truth, and that He, accordingly, was really what He claimed to be—the divine Redeemer. In the Resurrection itself He proved once more His divinity by showing Himself as Lord over life and death, omnipotent. In Christ's Resurrection, consequently, we have a firm guarantee of His divinity and of the truth of His doctrine, our faith. (b) As, therefore, the doctrine of Christ is true, we also shall rise again one day. For Christ has taught most positively the resurrec-

tion of the dead. "The hour cometh," etc. (cf. XXVII.). "I will awaken him at the last day" (XXXVI.). "I am the resurrection and the life," etc. (LV.). Christ's resurrection, therefore, is the surest pledge of our own resurrection. (c) Finally, the Lord's resurrection teaches us that we are to arise from the "grave of sin," to rise to a new and holy life. What effect should the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ have upon us? Why did Christ rise again? Easter Confession and Communion.—What are we commanded to do by the fourth commandment of the Church? 2. *The Glorified Body*. "Jesus rose gloriously from the grave." His sacred body was transformed and glorified. The glorified body possesses the following qualities: (a) Incorruptibility, together with immortality and inability to suffer; (b) transparency—that is to say, it shines like the sun; (c) agility—that means it can transport itself as quickly as thought from one place to another; (d) subtleness—penetrating everything. Thus Jesus came out of the sealed tomb without the stone having to be removed. 3. *The Festival of Easter is the Most Sublime in the Entire Ecclesiastical Year*, because upon that day is celebrated the mystery of Christ's resurrection, which warrants the truth of Christianity. Easter is celebrated upon the Sunday after the first vernal full moon. Which prophecies and prototypes are now fulfilled?

E. *Moral Application*.—You, too, will rise from death again one day. Then you will resume the same body that you possess now. Respect this body, in order that it may rise again gloriously. He who profanes his body by impurity will also rise again, but with a terribly disfigured body.

LXXXI.—JESUS APPEARS TO MAGDALEN AND THE OTHER WOMEN. THE CHIEF PRIESTS BRIBE THE GUARDS.

A. *Preparation*.—On that same morning the Risen One appeared to Mary Magdalen and the other pious women, who had betaken themselves to the Lord's grave in order to anoint His body. While Jesus' reappearance caused these women the greatest joy, His enemies were greatly disturbed at what the guards reported to them, and they gave the latter considerable money to keep silent about it.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Peter and John at the grave of Jesus. (b) Mary Magdalen at the grave. Appearance of the Lord. (c) Jesus and the holy women. (d) The chief priests and the guards.

C. Explanation.—(a) “Fear”—awe of the angel whom they had seen. “Joy”—at what they heard. Meanwhile the apostles hurried to the tomb, having heard from Magdalen that the body of Jesus had been stolen. Magdalen returned to the grave. “Grave cloth”—in which they had wrapped the body of Jesus. Peter went in and saw the linen cloths, each in its own place. That is to say, where the feet had lain, there lay the foot cloths; where the sacred head had rested, they found the head cloth, etc. (b) “She did not know him, however,” because Jesus had assumed the form of an ordinary man. “Touch me not”! Mary wished to embrace the Lord, that He might not again be taken away from her. Jesus saith to her: “Go to my brethren,” meaning the apostles. Magdalen told the disciples: “I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me, namely, these words: “I ascend to my Father,” etc.

D. Commentary.—**I. Truth and Reality of Jesus' Resurrection.** That Jesus really and truly is risen (see also the testimony of the angel in LXXX.: “He is risen, for he is risen as he said”) is proved: (a) Through Peter and John, who found the Lord's grave empty; (b) through Jesus Himself, who appeared to Mary Magdalen and the other holy women; (c) through the guards, who reported the resurrection to the chief priests; and, finally, (d) through the action of Jesus' enemies, who gave money to the guards that they might suppress the truth, and spread the report that the disciples had stolen the body. **2. Fresh Sins of Jesus' Enemies.** The high priests were much perplexed at the guard's report. They, too, could no longer doubt as to Jesus' divinity. That which He had announced to them as the strongest proof of His divinity, namely, that He would rise again, had actually been fulfilled. But, instead of atoning for their wicked deed by sincere contrition, they remained stubborn and hardened in their impenitence. **Sins against the Holy Ghost.**—They even added fresh sins to the old ones. They induced the guards to lie and gave them money for it. Being accessory to the sins of others. **Lying.**

E. Moral Application.—Mary Magdalen was amply rewarded for her faithful love of Jesus by the Risen One appearing to her. Do you also possess an ardent love for your Saviour? If you are sorry for having offended Jesus by sin, and observe from henceforth His commandments faithfully, then you, too, love the Saviour. So that God may strengthen and increase our love we will now awaken the act of charity.

LXXXII.—JESUS APPEARS TO PETER AND TO TWO DISCIPLES ON THEIR WAY TO EMMAUS.

A. *Preparation*.—On the day of the Resurrection two of Jesus' disciples betook themselves to a small town some miles west of Jerusalem, called Emmaus. Upon the way thither the divine Saviour appeared to them, and shortly before that had shown Himself to Peter. The following story will tell us about it.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Meeting upon the road to Emmaus. (b) Arrival at Emmaus. The breaking of bread. (c) Return of the disciples.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Art thou alone, a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days"? especially on that last morning. There Jesus approached in the disguise of a pilgrim returning home after the Easter festival. "But we hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel"—delivered from the power of the Romans. "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken," concerning the Redeemer and His work of redemption, "He expounded to them"; that is to say, explained to them how the prophecies and figures of the Messias were to be understood. (b) "Jesus went in with them," namely, into the house in which one of the disciples dwelt. "Whilst he was at table He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them," as at the Last Supper. "And their eyes were opened," meaning their spiritual eyes. The result of this was that they regarded the stranger more closely, and now with their bodily eyes they knew Him as the Lord. They said one to another: "Was not our heart burning within us (for love) whilst he was speaking in the way, and opened to us the scriptures?" meaning explained the meaning of Holy Writ. (c) And they went back to Jerusalem, to bring this glad message to the apostles: "The Lord is risen indeed." The women were therefore right.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Truth and Reality of Jesus' Resurrection*. The Saviour has truly risen. This is proven by the testimony of the disciples and apostles. Did the Lord's disciples also see Him after the Resurrection? Whence do we know that Jesus Christ is truly risen? 2. *Peter's Pre-eminence*. The Saviour appeared specially to Peter, thereby distinguishing him above the other apostles. This is a new proof for the primacy of Peter. 3. *Holy Communion*. As Jesus at Emmaus took bread in His sacred hands, blessed it, brake, and then handed it to His disciples, He did the same as at the Last Supper. He gave the disciples His sacred body, and they received Holy Communion. What is Holy Communion? Although

the disciples partook only under the form of bread, still they received Christ entire; His sacred blood as well, therefore. Must we drink of the chalice in order to partake of the blood of Christ?

E. Moral Application.—Mark well the Lord's words: "What are these discourses that you hold one with another?" Jesus is also near you. Take care that you never hold a conversation which would grieve the blessed Saviour (cursing, scolding, lying, etc.).

LXXXIII.—JESUS APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES AND INSTITUTES THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

A. Preparation.—While the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus were still speaking, Jesus stood suddenly in the midst of the apostles, and instituted the Sacrament of Penance. I will now tell you about this.

B. Narration.—(a) The Lord's appearing. (b) Rejoicing of the disciples. (c) Institution of the Sacrament of Penance.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Jesus stood in the midst of them"—without the door having been opened. "Peace be to you"—a favorite salutation in the Orient. "My hands and my feet," etc., where the apostles saw the marks of the wounds. (b) "While they yet believed not, and wondered for joy," in their exceedingly great joy they could hardly realize that it was Jesus who stood before them. "And when he had eaten before them"—before their eyes, so as to convince them that He was not a Spirit, but a real body. Then He explained to them the meaning of the Scriptures, as He had done to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. (c) "As the Father hath sent me," etc., meaning with the same sovereignty and to the same end. "And when he had said this, he breathed upon them." What Jesus thereby intended the following words teach: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven"—by God.

D. Commentary.—1. *Truth and Reality of Jesus' Resurrection.* This story contains new proofs of the Lord's resurrection. Jesus appeared to the assembled apostles, showed them the marks of His wounds, allowed them to touch Him, and ate before their eyes. The apostles no longer doubted that Jesus was actually there with the body with which He had suffered and that had been laid in the tomb (cf. LXXXII., D 1). 2. The sending forth and mission of the apostles with the words: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." The Lord transmitted to the apostles the same authority that He Himself possessed. He sent them forth for the same purpose for which He had come into the world. Christ had come into the world,

“that the world might be saved through him” (XVI.). Consequently it is the mission of the apostles and their successors to lead men to salvation. For what purpose did Christ found the Church? That the apostles and their successors might be qualified for the task, the Saviour transmitted to them and their successors His power and authority; that is to say, His teaching, pastoral and priestly office. What did Christ do so that the Church be enabled to lead all men to eternal salvation? The Sacrament of Penance. By His death upon the cross the Saviour had reconciled the offended God and obtained for us pardon of our sins. In order that this grace might be applied to each individual He instituted the Sacrament of Penance, in which the apostles and their successors, in God’s stead, remit sins, if the sinner is worthy of it. What is the Sacrament of Penance? When did Christ institute the Sacrament of Penance? As Christ has said quite generally, without any restriction, “Whose sins you shall forgive,” etc., therefore *all* sins, without exception, can be remitted in the Sacrament of Penance. Can *all* sins be remitted? Since Christ willed that the apostles and their successors should be empowered to remit or retain sins, He thereby ordained that the sinner should confess his sins to the apostles or their successors, because they would not know whether to remit or retain sins unless they know what they are, and they would expose themselves to the danger of pronouncing an unjust sentence, contradictory to God’s justice. Why must we therefore confess our sins in order to obtain their remission?

E. Moral Application.—Return grateful thanks to the Saviour for having instituted the holy Sacrament of Penance; be careful to receive the same, well prepared and worthily.

LXXXIV.—JESUS SHOWS THE MARKS OF HIS WOUNDS TO THOMAS.

A. Preparation.—When the Saviour appeared to the apostles, on the day of the Resurrection, Thomas was not with them. He would not believe when told that the Lord had been with the apostles. Hence Jesus appeared again to the apostles and rebuked Thomas for his unbelief. I will now tell you about this.

B. Narration.—(a) Thomas’ incredulity. (b) Second appearance of the Lord.

C. Explanation.—(a) “Unless I shall see the print of the nails,” meaning unless I can see myself and be convinced of it I shall not believe it.

(b) "Thomas answered: My Lord, and my God." Now Thomas believed. Jesus saith to him: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen," namely, as thou hast seen.

D. Commentary.—1. *Truth and Reality of Jesus' Resurrection.* The second appearance of the Lord is a fresh proof that He really rose with the body that had been laid in the grave (cf. LXXXIII., D 1). 2. *Jesus True God.* The resurrection of the Lord is a plain proof for His divinity, but we shall find further proofs of it in our story. Jesus knew what Thomas had said. He proved, therefore, again His omniscience. Thomas called Him his "God," and Jesus accepted from Thomas this confession of faith. He declared blessed all those who would believe Him to be God without seeing. What is the teaching of the apostles concerning the divinity of Jesus? 3. *Sunday.* Jesus arose from the dead upon a Sunday. The apostles celebrated this day and kept it in veneration, as follows from the fact that on the following Sunday they were again assembled in the room of the Last Supper, praying. The Saviour also sent the Holy Ghost upon a Sunday, and therefore the Christians celebrate Sunday as the day of the Lord instead of the Sabbath (Saturday). Why do we celebrate Sunday instead of the Sabbath?

B. Moral Application.—"Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." These words apply to us. Hold fast to your holy Catholic faith, live according to it; and be not afraid to confess it before men; then your faith will accomplish your salvation.

LXXXV.—JESUS BESTOWED ON PETER THE SUPREME PASTORSHIP.

A. Preparation.—On the morning of the Resurrection the Saviour had, through the holy women, sent word to the disciples that they should go into Galilee. The disciples therefore left Jerusalem and went to Galilee, where the Lord again appeared to them, and made Peter the supreme pastor of His Church. I will now tell you about it.

B. Narration.—(a) The disciples on the sea. (b) Jesus appears. The large draught of fishes. (c) Bestowal of the supreme pastorship on Peter. (d) Prediction of Peter's crucifixion.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Early in the evening they went forth to fish." They had resumed their former trade, intending to continue it until the coming of the Holy Ghost. (b) Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples, however, knew not that it was the Saviour because the distance was great. "Peter cast himself

into the sea and swam to the shore," in order to reach the Saviour more quickly. (c) Jesus saith to Simon Peter: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" meaning than the other apostles. "Lambs"—the young sheep which follow the elder sheep. By "lambs" are understood the faithful, by the "sheep" the clergy and bishops. Thus Peter was made the chief pastor of the Church of Jesus. "Then Peter was sad," because he was reminded of his triple denial of the Lord. (d) Jesus said: "When thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself," so as to step out vigorously. "But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands (on the cross), whither thou would'st not," namely, to martyrdom.

D. *Commentary.*—I. *Truth and Reality of Jesus' Resurrection.* That Jesus was really risen from the dead was again proved by His reappearance at the lake Genesareth (cf. LXXXIII.). 2. *Jesus True God.* The risen Saviour revealed His divinity at Lake Genesareth by letting the apostles take a large catch of fish without the net breaking, although filled with over a hundred large fish, and by foretelling Peter that he would die upon the cross, thereby glorifying God. Peter's crucifixion actually took place in the year 67. Which divine attributes did Jesus therefore reveal? What do you mean by saying "God is omnipotent," "omniscient"? 3. *Peter Supreme Pastor.* The Lord had repeatedly preferred Simon Peter before the other apostles (cf. XIII., XXII., XXXVIII.). This was again noticeable in this event. After the divine Saviour had let Peter assure three times that he had greater love than the other apostles, He made him chief pastor of His whole flock—of the Church. How do we know that Christ appointed Peter the supreme head of His Church? Was this office to cease after Peter's death? Who is the visible supreme head of the Church since St. Peter's death? 4. *Concerning the Symbolical Meaning of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (cf. XX.).

E. *Moral Application.*—What would your answer be if the Saviour were to ask you, "Lovest thou me"? Bear in mind that "He who hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

LXXXVI.—THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

A. *Preparation.*—The divine Saviour often appeared to His disciples during the forty days which He remained on earth after His resurrection. At the end of these forty days the apostles betook themselves to Jerusalem, where the Saviour appeared to them for the last time, to return after this to heaven. I will now tell you about this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Lord appears again. (b) Promise of the Holy Ghost. Last instructions to the apostles. (c) The ascension.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "By many proofs he manifested himself," etc.—by appearing to them again. "He spoke of the kingdom of God" upon earth—that is to say, the Church. He instructed them exactly concerning its arrangement, destiny, doctrine and the means of grace. "Also other disciples," who did not belong to the apostles. (b) Jesus commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Ghost, which he had announced to them upon a former occasion (cf. LXVIII.). "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." "Hence I give you the commission to go forth into the whole world," etc. "And behold I am with you always," and shall assist you, therefore, in your activity. (c) "And when he had said these things, while they were beholding him, he ascended into heaven," rising slowly toward it. "Men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up into heaven?" They came from Galilee. They rejoiced at the news of the angels, that the Saviour, after so many sufferings, would now, in heaven, enjoy the honor and glory due him, and they, too, would one day be united with him there.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Sixth Article of the Creed*. Before the eyes of the apostles Jesus returned into heaven, of His own power, with body and soul, accompanied by the just set free from limbo, there to enter into possession of His glory, and to be our mediator and intercessor with the Father, and to prepare an abode for us there. What do the words teach us, "Ascended into heaven"? Did Christ ascend into heaven alone? Where and why did Christ ascend into heaven? In commemoration of the Lord's return into heaven the Church celebrates, forty days after Easter, the Feast of Christ's Ascension. On that day, at High Mass, at the words of the Gospel, "And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven," the Paschal candle is extinguished (conclusion of the Paschal cycle).—The Second Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary: The Ascension. 2. *Twofold Office of the Apostles and their Successors*. With the words, "Go ye therefore into the whole world," etc., the Lord transmitted (a) the teaching office to the apostles and their successors, which, according to the Lord's words, "Behold, I am with you," etc., is infallible; (b) the priestly office, the power to administer the Sacraments: "Baptizing them," etc.; (c) the pastoral office consists in supervising the faithful who shall be held to the observance of the commandments ("Teaching them to keep all things," etc.). That this threefold office was also transmitted to the successors of the apostles follows from Jesus' own words: "Behold, I am with you all days, until the end of the world."

Which office did Christ transmit, with His authority, to the apostles? From whom have we the assurance that the teaching office of the Church cannot err? 3. *The Holy Trinity*. From the words of Jesus, "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," it follows that there are several persons in God. How many persons are there in God? What do we call this mystery of one God in three persons? The Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, on the first Sunday after Pentecost. 4. *The Church of Jesus is Catholic, or Universal*. The apostles were to teach the true faith to all nations, "Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles," and receive them into the Church of Jesus. "Until the end of the world," the Saviour desired to remain with His assistance and protection in His Church. The Church is therefore universal, not only in regard to space—as she was to spread herself all over the world—but also as to time, as she is destined to exist upon earth until the end of the world. Why is the Roman Catholic Church manifestly catholic, or universal? 5. *Fulfilling of the Prophecies* (a) David's: "The Lord said to my Lord, sit upon my right," etc. (see O. T., LVIII.); (b) Christ's: "Now when you shall see the Son of man returning whence He came" (XXXVI.), and, "From henceforth you shall behold the Son of man seated at the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of heaven" (LXXI.). 6. *The Seventh Article of the Creed*. What is the seventh article of the creed, and what does it teach?

E. *Moral Application*.—Jesus returned to heaven to prepare a place also for you. Heaven is your home. Think of this as often as you say, in the "Our Father," "Our Father, who art in heaven." Lead a good and devout life, and then you will surely go to heaven.

CONCLUSION.

"Many other things which Jesus did are not related," etc. With these words St. John concludes his Gospel.

Explanation.—Signs (Miracles). "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written, every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." Christ, the Messias, the Redeemer.

Commentary.—Necessity of tradition, verbal transmission of truths. Many things that Jesus did and taught are not in the gospels. We know, for instance, from the gospels very little as to what Jesus said to His apostles in the forty days after His resur-

rection. The apostles did not write down much of what Jesus revealed to them. They propagated it verbally by their preaching. Is it then enough for us to believe only what is found in Holy Scripture? What is understood by tradition? (XIV., XV.).

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD FROM THE RESURRECTION TO CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

1. Brief account of these chapters. 2. Proofs for the truth and reality of the Resurrection. 3. Which prophecies and prototypes of the Messiah have been fulfilled?

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES.

LXXXVII.—CHOOSING OF THE APOSTLE MATTHIAS.

A. Preparation.—According to the Lord's instructions the apostles remained at Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Ghost. During this time they prayed fervently, and at Peter's proposal they elected another apostle to serve in place of the unhappy Judas. I will now tell you about this.

B. Narration.—(a) The apostles and disciples of Jesus in the room of the Last Supper, at Jerusalem. (b) The apostles choose Matthias.

C. Explanation.—(a) "They persevered in prayer," jointly with the Blessed Virgin and the other holy women, so as to prepare themselves worthily for the coming of the Holy Ghost. (b) He must be chosen from among those who were eye and ear witnesses of those things which Jesus did and taught. And they prayed: "Thou, O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen." And they gave them lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.

D. Commentary.—1. *Peter's Supremacy* (primacy). Peter was chief of the apostles. In that capacity he proposed and conducted the election of the apostle Matthias. The apostles recognized him as their head, for they complied immediately with his proposal and named two disciples for the apostolic office. 2. *Mary in her Relation to the Church of Christ.* Even in the early days of the Church of Jesus, Mary, as Jesus' mother, was held in high esteem by the faithful, and was venerated by them. The faithful would not be without her. She united her prayers to the petitions of the Church. We also hold Mary in high regard, and take recourse to her in prayer, that we may be heard the sooner. Whom ought we to honor and invoke in preference to all angels and saints? Why should we honor and invoke Mary specially?

E. Moral Application.—Venerate the mother of God from the depth of your heart. A special devotion to her is considered as a sign of election for heaven. (Prayer to the Blessed Virgin.)

LXXXVIII.—DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

A. *Preparation*.—Finally the desired day arrived of the descent of the Holy Ghost, for which the apostles and disciples of Jesus had carefully prepared themselves by devout prayer. I will now proceed to tell you how the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Descent of the Holy Ghost. (b) The miracle of languages. (c) Peter's first sermon. (d) Effect of the same.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were altogether in the same place," in the cenaculum, or upper room. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (that means they received the fullness of the graces of the Holy Spirit), and they began to speak with divers tongues." This was a miracle, as before that they only spoke their mother tongue. (b) The multitude came together when they heard this. They came, out of curiosity, to the house where the apostles were assembled. And some "mocking, said: These men are full of new wine," meaning they have drank too much. (c) Peter spoke to them: "These are not drunk, as you suppose; it is but the third hour of the day" (nine o'clock in the morning). Peter told them that Jesus was the Redeemer and the Son of God; that they must be converted to Christ the Lord. (d) "Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart"; that means the words seized upon and moved the auditors. "Do penance and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ"; that is to say, through Baptism, which Jesus had instituted for the forgiveness of sins."

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Eighth Article of the Creed*. Jesus fulfilled His promise on the first feast of Pentecost: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth" (LXVIII.). This Spirit of truth Jesus sent to His Church so as to preserve her from all error. "He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that which I have told you"—sanctify her members and govern her. When was the Holy Ghost sent to the Church? What graces does the Holy Ghost dispense to the Church? What graces does the Holy Ghost dispense to souls? How has Christ provided that the Church is enabled to do this?—lead men to eternal salvation. The Third Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary: Who sent down the Holy Ghost? 2. *The Fiery Tongues*. By this outward manifestation of the Holy Ghost the inner workings of grace were to be made evident. As fire illumines, warms and purifies, so were the apostles illumined

by the Holy Ghost with the light of faith, kindled with the fire of charity, and purified from sin. The Holy Ghost appeared in the form of fiery tongues, to indicate also that He would make them eloquent, by conferring upon them the gift of languages. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost. 3. *Peter's Supremacy* (Primacy). Peter exercised his office as chief of the apostles by being the first to make a public appearance, preaching and receiving into the Church the first faithful three thousand. 4. *The Feast of Pentecost*. On the fiftieth day after Easter the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles. On that day the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost. Because on the first Feast of Pentecost the Holy Ghost was sent to the Church of Jesus, and she, for the first time, appeared publicly and received into her bosom three thousand faithful, this festival is considered the birthday of the Church. Concerning the resemblance between the Christian and the Jewish Feast of Pentecost (see O. T., XLII.). The Pentecostal ceremonies. 5. *Fulfilling of the Prophecies*. (a) Of Jeremiah: "I will set my law within them," etc. (O. T., LXXIX.). (b) Of Ezekiel: "I will give you my spirit" (O. T., LXXX.). (c) Of the Saviour (see above).

E. *Moral Application*.—The Holy Ghost is the dispenser of graces, without which we can not be saved. Have great devotion, therefore, to the Holy Ghost, and avoid grieving Him by committing sins.

LXXXIX.—HEALING OF THE LAME MAN.

A. *Preparation*.—After the apostles had received the Holy Ghost they had no more fear of the Jews; they appeared publicly, worked miracles, preached and received people into the Church. The high priest and elders hated the apostles as much as they hated the Saviour, frequently they caused them to be thrown into prison. We shall hear of this in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The miraculous healing of the lame man. (b) Peter's sermon. (c) Peter and John in prison and before the high council.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "One day"—after the Feast of Pentecost. "Silver and gold I have none," Peter said, "but what I have I give thee," meaning I possess no money, and consequently can not give you any. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk"! "And forthwith his feet and soles became firm, so that he could stand and walk." (b) "Then Peter spoke," turning to the multitude who had followed him: "Why do you wonder, as

if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk," rather by the power of God. The God of our fathers (of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), "hath glorified his Son Jesus," in whose name I have worked the miracle by which you are enabled to recognize His divinity. In His name, as divine Redeemer. "And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance," etc. Peter deals very leniently with the Jews, in order to make it easier for them to reform. (c) "By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" namely, healed the man born lame. "By him doth this man stand here before you whole"—the lame man. "Jesus is the stone." Peter compares the Church, therefore, to an edifice. "Cornerstone"—the important stone which gives firmness and support to the building. "Salvation," namely, eternal salvation, meaning only through Christ can we be saved. "Thereupon they threatened them," to intimidate them.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Jesus True God*. The Lord's divinity is proved in our story (a) by the miracle which Peter worked in the name of Jesus (notice the difference in the miracles which Jesus worked from those of the apostles); (b) by the words of Peter, who called Jesus the Son of God, the "author of life." ("The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus.") What is the apostle's testimony? 2. "*Nor is there Salvation in any other*" than in *Jesus Christ*. Jesus had Himself said: "I am the way, the truth and the life," "no one cometh to the Father but by me;" "those who follow after me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Only through faith in Jesus, through imitation of Him, can we possess eternal life. Do all faiths lead to salvation? Why does the faith taught by Jesus alone save? Which Church has the true faith taught by Christ? Why has the Catholic Church alone the true faith taught by Christ? 3. *Unlawful Obedience*. Although the Saviour Himself had taught, by word and deed, obedience to superiors, yet Peter and John refused to obey the high council. Did they act rightly? Certainly! For the high council demanded them to cease preaching the Gospel; Christ, however, had expressly commanded the apostles to preach. ("Go forth into all nations and teach," etc.). In what case may we refuse obedience to parents, superiors, officials?

E. *Moral Application*.—Be careful to pronounce with the greatest respect the name of Jesus, in which name Peter worked this great miracle. Bear this in mind, and repeat often the beautiful words, "Praised be Jesus Christ."

XC.—THE HOLY LIFE OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS. ANANIAS AND SAPHIRA.

A. *Preparation*.—Those converted by the preaching of the apostles, and received into the faith, led a most edifying life. On one occasion, however, it happened that two of the faithful were guilty of hypocrisy and lying, for which they were severely punished. We shall learn about this in the following story.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The holy life of the first Christians. (b) Hypocrisy and lying of Ananias and Saphira, and their punishment.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) They persevered in the teaching of the apostles. That means they were diligent in assisting at the instructions and sermons of the apostles, communication of the breaking of bread; that is to say, they participated in the Holy Mass and Holy Communion, in the beginning called "breaking of bread," because Jesus at the Last Supper, as well as on the day of the Resurrection at Emmaus, had broken the bread, changed it into His sacred body, and handed it to the disciples. "The Lord daily increased the number of those who were to be saved," by bringing more and more faithful to the Church by His grace. "They were one heart and one soul," etc., they lived in perfect harmony. "All things were common to them"—the rich divided their property with the poor. Owners of land sold it, and brought the proceeds to the apostles, who looked after the distribution of the gifts received. (b) Peter said: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart"; led it astray, and why hast thou consented? Why hast thou lied to the Holy Ghost? Because he had lied to those filled and illumined by the Holy Ghost (the apostles). Peter said unto Saphira: "Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" by putting His omniscience to the test. And there came great fear upon the whole Church on account of the divine chastisements.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Divine Worship in the Days of the Apostles was the Same as it is to-day*. The faithful regularly attended sermons and Christian doctrine, assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, received Holy Communion, and prayed in common. Their zeal in receiving Holy Communion was so great that they approached the Lord's table daily. What is Holy Communion? Is the command to receive Holy Communion from God or only from the Church? Should it be sufficient for us to receive Holy Communion only once a year? 2. *The Unity of the Church*. That which Jesus prayed for in His prayer as high priest, "Let them be perfect, that the world may know that thou hast sent me," we behold fulfilled in His Church in the days of the

apostles. "They had but one heart and one soul"; they were perfectly united, therefore. The Christians were united in faith, in doctrine; they persevered unanimously in prayer and in obedience to the apostle Peter. How do we know the true Church of Christ? Why is the Roman Catholic Church united? 3. *The Supremacy of Peter.* That Peter realized that he was chief of the apostles, and exercised his supremacy, is proved in this story, where we learn that he visited divine chastisement upon Ananias and Saphira after the Holy Ghost had revealed their deception to him. 4. *Hypocrisy and Lying.* Ananias and Saphira made pretense of laying down all their possessions at the feet of the apostles in order to be considered zealous and charitable. Of what sins did they thereby become guilty? How do we sin by hypocrisy? Saphira knowingly and intentionally spoke an untruth when Peter asked her. What is lying? 5. *Divinity and Personality of the Holy Ghost.* From Peter's words "Thou hast lied to the Holy Ghost, thou hast not lied to men, but to God," we perceive that the Holy Ghost is true God and really a person, as only a real person can be lied to. Who is the Holy Ghost?

E. *Moral Application.*—From the severe punishment inflicted by God, through Peter, upon Ananias and Saphira, we may perceive how sinful hypocrisy and lies are in God's sight. If in the past you have been guilty of such sins, make now a firm resolution to amend in this respect for the future.

XCI.—THE APOSTLES IN PRISON AND BEFORE THE HIGH COUNCIL.

A. *Preparation.*—As the apostles, notwithstanding the threats of the high council, did not cease to preach, and to gain adherents to the faith, the high priests caused them to be thrown into prison. When miraculously delivered from captivity, and again preaching, they were taken and led before the high council. The following story relates this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Activity of the apostles. (b) The apostles in prison. (c) Before the high council.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord was more increased," in consequence of the great miracles. (b) "The high priest," namely Annas. They laid hands on the apostles and cast them into the common prison, so as to prevent the further spread of the Church. And an angel of the Lord set them free by night, saying: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life"; that means the Gospel, by the obeying of which we attain life eternal. (c) "We

commanded that you should not teach in this name." In his hatred toward Jesus he would not even pronounce the name. "The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus" upon God's right hand. A Pharisee named Gamaliel, respected by all the people, spoke thus: "Refrain from these men, for if their work (the spreading of the Church) be of men, it will fall to nothing"; that means the Church will vanish. "But if it be of God, you are not able to destroy it, not even by killing the apostles." And they charged them not to speak at all—not to teach in the name of Jesus.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Church of Jesus is Indestructible.* Gamaliel had spoken truly. As a matter of fact, the blind hatred of the high council could not prevail against the Church of Jesus. And all the oppression and destruction that has been attempted against the Church of Jesus throughout the centuries, unto our own times, have rebounded impotently from the rock, Peter, upon which the Church is firmly grounded. "The gates of hell" have not been able to overcome her, for she is a divine work." 2. *Peter's Supremacy.* This again appears plainly in our story. Great and most astonishing miracles are worked by Peter. Many of the sick are cured merely by his shadow. Before the high council he answered in the name of all the apostles, fearlessly, as once before: "We ought to obey God rather than men." 3. *Unlawful Obedience* (see LXXXIX.) 4. *The Virtue of Fortitude.* Although the high council had strictly forbidden the apostles to further teach in the name of Jesus, and although the apostles had been cruelly scourged, and risked more hardships if they would not render obedience to the high council, yet they did not in the least let this deter them from doing their duty as Christ had commissioned it to them. They possessed in a high degree the virtue of fortitude, which consists in not letting difficulties and persecutions deter us from the practice of good works. To which virtues belongs the virtue of fortitude? Which are the cardinal virtue?"

E. Moral Application.—Confess your faith with fortitude; fulfil the duties which the faith prescribes, irrespective of the ridicule, derision or persecution of your fellow men. Never be ashamed to pray or to show respect to the cross!

XCII.—ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF THE DEACONS. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

A. Preparation.—As the Christian community at Jerusalem increased steadily, and the apostles found their number insufficient to supervise it prop-

erly, they chose assistants, whom they called deacons. One of these deacons became the first martyr. This story will tell us about it.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Election and ordination of the deacons. (b) Stephen before the high council. (c) His sermon. (d) His death.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "In those days, the number of the disciples increasing," meaning the number of the faithful. "Brethren, look ye out among you for seven men of good reputation"—known to the community by their piety. (b) "Power"—power of faith. Certain men of the synagogue disputed with him (Stephen) concerning the faith. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke." That is to say, the Holy Ghost, who enlightened and inspired him as to what he should say, they were unable to refute Stephen. And his face appeared like an angel's, as pure and innocent as an angel's. (c) "You have been stubborn," because they had not obeyed God, but had resisted His grace. "With heart and ears you have resisted the Holy Ghost," meaning your hearts will not accept the truth, your ears will not listen to it. (d) "Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked steadfastly up to heaven," full of confidence. "Then they cried out with a loud voice," because they imagined Stephen was uttering blasphemy; "stopped their ears," so as not to hear any more. "They took off their garments, that they might be unimpeded, and thereby able to throw better," and "they laid them at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul," that he should mind them. "Then Stephen fell upon his knees," because, in consequence of his numerous wounds, he could no longer stand up. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Compare, "Father forgive," etc.)

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Deaconship*. With the growing number of the faithful, new offices and appointments became necessary in the Church. The deacons were from the early times the priests' assistants. Their task consisted in taking care of the poor and in supporting the priests and bishops in the care of souls, assisting them at Mass, and helping them in preaching and baptizing. The deacons, for their part, were assisted by subdeacons. If the deacons persevered, they were, after a time, consecrated to be priests. Are there any other ordinations besides that of priests? 2. *Virtues of Stephen*. He possessed (a) a lively faith—full of grace, he did great wonders and miracles; (b) great wisdom, a gift of the Holy Ghost; (c) an angel-like innocence and purity of heart; (d) fervent charity toward his neighbors, to whom he gladly took the knowledge of the true faith; (e) fortitude; (f) a great love of God, for whom he cheerfully sacrificed his life; (g) patience in suffering; (h) love of his enemies

("Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"). The Feast of St. Stephen is on December 26. 3. *The Sins against the Holy Ghost.* Like the Jews in the Old Law, so also their descendants sinned perpetually against the Holy Ghost. They beheld the great miracles worked by the apostles and disciples; they heard the wisdom with which Stephen spoke and proved to them the truth of Christianity, but they stubbornly resisted divine grace, which had been offered to them so abundantly; they remained hardened and impenitent. Which are the six sins against the Holy Ghost? 4. *The Stoning of Stephen was a Murder, a Premeditated Slaying.* (The fifth commandment.) The Sins Crying to Heaven for Vengeance. 5. *Saul's Sin.* Saul took part in the unjust slaying of Stephen, although he threw no stone. He minded the murderer's garments, and thereby consented and helped their sin. The nine ways of being accessory to another's sin.²

E. *Moral Application.*—Learn of Stephen to love your neighbors, even those who do you injury. This is genuine Christianity.

XCIH.—PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM AND FURTHER SPREADING OF THE SAME. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

A. *Preparation.*—The stoning of Stephen was the signal for a great persecution of the Church. Many Christians, for this reason, fled from Jerusalem. How this persecution and scattering helped to propagate the Church, and how the apostles administered the Sacrament of Confirmation, we shall learn in the following story.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Persecution of the Church. (b) The preaching of Philip in Samaria. (c) Administering the Sacrament of Confirmation.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "And they went about preaching the glad message of the word of God," the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the divine word. (b) "Philip," one of the seven deacons, against whom the fury of the Church's persecutors was specially directed. (c) "Those who had received the word of God," meaning the true faith, went down into Samaria, situated lower than Jerusalem. "They had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," they had received the baptism instituted by Jesus, not the baptism of John.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Ruling of Divine Providence.* Although the Church of Jesus was yet young, a storm of persecution soon broke loose against it. By contemplating these events, one is at first

(1) See page 66.

(2) See page 35.

inclined to ask, how God could permit such danger to menace His Church. We shall see, however, that wisdom shows itself in this persecution, since, by dispersing in Judea and Samaria, and by their preaching, the faithful gained new adherents to the true faith, and thus the Church was propagated ever more widely. The high council and its associates intended evil against the Church. "God, however, turned it into good." Since God orders and governs everything in the world, why does so much evil take place? Does He will this also? 2. *The Sacrament of Confirmation*.—When the apostles went to Samaria they prayed over the baptized and laid hands upon them, whereupon they received the Holy Ghost. Thus they administered the Sacrament of Confirmation, confirmation meaning fortifying or strengthening, because those who receive it are strengthened by the Holy Ghost, that they may steadfastly confess their faith and remain faithful to it. What is Confirmation? This Sacrament was instituted by Christ, otherwise the apostles could not have administered it. Who are the successors of the apostles? Who has accordingly, the power to confirm?

E. *Moral Application*.—Take for your model the heroic steadfastness of the faithful of those times. Do not be afraid or ashamed to confess your faith publicly when necessary, and live according to the same (cf. XCI.).

XCIV.—THE OFFICER OF THE QUEEN ETHIOPIA.

A. *Preparation*.—While Philip sojourned in Samaria an angel appeared to him, giving him directions to dispense the Sacrament of Baptism to a high dignitary of the queen of Ethiopia (in Africa, south of Egypt). I will now tell you about this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Philip and the official. (b) Baptism of the same.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Gaza" (cf. O. T., XV.). "A man of Ethiopia," adherent of the Jewish faith who had just returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. "Treasurer"—chief guardian of the property. "As a sheep he was led to the slaughter." (see O. T., LXXVII.). "Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest?" that is to say, what the prophet Isaiah means thereby? Philip tells him of the glad tidings about Jesus, meaning that Jesus the Redeemer is meant by those words; how by believing in Him, and through Baptism, he might become a member of His Church. (b) "The Spirit of the Lord took Philip away"—he vanished suddenly.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Church of Jesus is Catholic, or Universal.* That treasurer was not a Jew, but an adherent of the Jewish faith, worshipping the true God with them. He belonged to the (pagan) nation of Ethiopia. By an angel of God inciting Philip to receive that man into the Church a new proof is adduced that the Church founded by Christ was destined for all nationalities, therefore universal. Which is the true Church founded by Christ? Why is the Church of Rome manifestly universal, or catholic? 2. *Faithful Co-operation with Divine Grace.* The treasurer had co-operated faithfully with divine grace. He had acknowledged the God of the Jews as the true God and had joined the Jews, without passing by circumcision altogether over to Judaism. He lived according to that faith, and even undertook a distant and perilous journey in order to worship the true God in the Temple at Jerusalem. For this faithful co-operation with grace God rewarded him by sending Philip, who received him into the Church of Jesus by holy Baptism. What must we do in order to attain the grace of salvation? 3. *Necessity of Faith.* The deacon Philip asked the treasurer: "If thou believest with thy whole heart, thou mayest." That means, I will baptize thee. And the Saviour Himself has taught: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Hence it follows that without the faith we shall not be saved. Is faith necessary to salvation?

E. *Moral Application.*—In holy Baptism you became members of the Church of Jesus and possessed the true faith. Show yourselves worthy of this great grace by living according to your faith, by conscientiously fulfilling the commandments. Which is your favorite fault? Contrition. Resolution.

XCIV.—THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

A. *Preparation.*—One of the bitterest enemies of the Church of Jesus was one Saul, whose name you have already heard. He persecuted the followers of Jesus, put them in chains and dragged them to prison. And think of it! This fierce enemy of the Lord and of His Church suddenly became a friend of the same and was baptized. We shall now hear how this came about.

B. *Narration.*—(a) The miraculous appearance before Damascus. (b) The Lord's commission to Ananias. (c) Saul's activity in Damascus and flight.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Letters of authority," in which he was permitted to imprison the Christians. "Damascus," capital city of Syria. "Light

from heaven," a supernatural light, in the midst of which Saul beheld the glorified Saviour. "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" by persecuting my Church? (b) Vision—appearance. Ananias answered: "Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how great evils he has done to my saints in Jerusalem" (to those who believe in thee). And the Lord said: "Go; for this man is a vessel of election to me, to carry my name," meaning my doctrine among the heathen. (c) "Saul, brother." Thus did Ananias call him, in his holy joy that Saul was converted. He was named Paul after his baptism.

D. Commentary.—1. *Jesus True God.* The conversion of Saul was miraculous and a proof of Jesus' divinity. Saul beheld the Lord in celestial glory, the brightness of which was so great that Saul could not endure the sight and was blinded. Saul called Him his "Lord," and preached at Damascus that Jesus was the "Son of God." Jesus proved His omniscience by sending Ananias to Saul, of whose change of heart He had precise knowledge, as well as prophesying to Ananias the future blessed activity of Paul and his manifold sufferings. 2. *The Miraculous Ruling of Divine Grace.* In the midst of his furious activity in persecuting the ray of divine grace reached Saul, changing this "ravenous wolf" into a zealous shepherd of the Church of Jesus. Grace so enlightened the persecutor Saul that he perceived his great crimes; it moved his will, which immediately turned away from evil and was ready for good works. "What wilt thou that I should do?" "He ate and drank nothing, but prayed continually. In what does the grace of assistance consist?" Saul did not receive the grace of God in vain. He did not resist it, but submitted himself entirely to the will of God. What must we do, that the grace of salvation may be bestowed upon us? 3. *The Sinner's Good Works.* "Saul ate and drank nothing for three days, but prayed constantly." It is true he was still in a state of mortal sin, as he had not yet received holy Baptism, still these good works were not useless, for they hastened his conversion, and in consequence of these good works he received abundant graces, by the help of which he acknowledged his wickedness and repented of it. Can man do good works in a state of mortal sin? Is the good that one does in a state of mortal sin useless?

E. Moral Application.—Ask yourself frequently, What wilt thou, Lord, that I should do? Remember God in everything that you do. "Have God before your eyes all the days of your life." Therein consists the art of becoming a saint.

XCVI.—PETER VISITS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

A. *Preparation*.—When the persecution of the Church at Jerusalem had somewhat relaxed, Peter visited the Christian communities in Palestine. I will now tell you what he accomplished there.

B. *Narration*.—(a) The Church at peace. (b) Peter at Lydda. (c) Peter at Joppe.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "The Church had peace now," after the conversion of her great enemy Saul. "She fortified herself in the faith." (b) "Lydda," northwest of Jerusalem. Peter said to Eneas, "the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee" (through me). "And they were all converted to the Lord," meaning they embraced the true faith and were baptized. (c) "Joppe," some miles northwest of Lydda. A woman disciple, one of the faithful. "She was full of good works, meaning she did much good, especially by almsgiving. "The widows all mourned because their benefactress was dead. "But Peter ordered them all to leave," that he might be undisturbed, for he wanted to ask God to call, through him, Tabitha back to life. "Then she opened her eyes," after he had prayed.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Church of Jesus*. The apostles went to all nations, preaching, baptizing and uniting themselves to those who believed and would be baptized. Thus there arose in many places Christian communities, as related in this story. These communities were in close connection; they formed the one great Catholic Church. 2. *The Primacy of Peter*. Peter was the only apostle who visited the Christian communities. He thus exercised supreme control over the entire Church, and proved thereby that he was chief of the apostles. 3. *Good Works*. The woman disciple Tabitha was, it is true, rich in worldly goods, but she employed her wealth according to the Lord's will—to do good. She laid up for herself thereby "treasures in heaven." "Blessed are the poor in spirit," etc. She looked, particularly, after poor widows, to whom she gave alms, and for whom she made clothes. What persons are specially recommended to our charity in Holy Scripture? What are the corporal works of mercy?

E. *Moral Application*.—Share what you have with your brothers, sisters and poor children. Remember, that avarice is a filthy vice. If you have little, give little. It is the intention that counts with God, not the size of the gift.

XCVII.—BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS.

A. Preparation.—Hitherto the apostles had only preached to the Jews and Samaritans, receiving into the Church those who believed. Jesus, however, had commanded them to preach also to the Gentiles, and to bring them into the Church. Through a miraculous vision Peter was reminded of this when at Joppe. Soon afterward Peter received the first heathen into the Church. The following story treats of this.

B. Narration.—(a) The miraculous vision. (b) The messengers from Cæsarea. (c) Peter's journey to Cæsarea. (d) His arrival and preaching. (e) Effects of the same.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Ecstasy"; that means his spirit was removed from the earth and beheld supernatural things. "All manner of four-footed beasts," clean and unclean. And a voice said: "Arise, Peter; kill and eat," according to your taste, clean or unclean beasts. "Unclean"; that means the flesh of animals which according to the Mosaic law were considered unclean (cf. O. T., LXXXI.). "That which God hath purified," as He offers it to thee as food. "And this was done thrice." This threefold vision and explanation removed from Peter's mind all doubt that the difference between clean and unclean animals no longer prevailed in the New Law. Furthermore, the Lord wished to signify thereby to His apostle that in the New Law the difference between clean and unclean persons, between Jews and Gentiles, had ceased to exist, and that all mankind, Jews or Gentiles, should be admitted to the Church. (b) "Cæsarea" north of Joppe. This was called Palestine Cæsarea to distinguish it from Cæsarea Philippi. "Cornelius," a Gentile who had embraced Judaism without the formal conversion by circumcision. (c) Brethren—faithful. (d) "They tell Peter what had happened," namely, that an angel had directed Cornelius to send for Peter. "In truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons," whether Jew or Gentile. "He that worketh justice is acceptable to Him," meaning he who lives righteously. "The word"; in the Old Testament the Revelation, in the New Testament the Gospel. "Peace"—peace of heart. "The word which hath been published through all Judea" by Jesus of Nazareth, who healed all that were oppressed by the devil (possessed). And all were witnesses of these things, especially at Jerusalem and in the land of the Jews. "Tree," the cross. "Witnesses," the apostles. (e) The faithful Jews," meaning those of the Christians who had previously been Jews. Peter answered: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" although they are Gentiles. "Antioch," in Syria. "Christians," named after Christ; in the beginning a name of mockery, given to the faithful by Jews and Gentiles.

D. Commentary.—I. *The Church is Catholic, or Universal.* Christ

had commanded the apostles to "go into the whole world and teach all nations, baptizing them. . . ."—but the apostles thought that, first of all, the Jews were to be gained for Christianity. By the vision of the clean and unclean beasts Peter was instructed that the distinction between clean and unclean persons had ceased; that the Church was intended for all men and for all nations. In order to completely dissipate all doubt on this subject, Cornelius and his relations and friends were filled with the Holy Ghost even before their baptism. Why is the Church of Rome manifestly catholic, or universal?

2. *Peter's Supremacy.* That marvelous vision, together with the instruction, was given to Peter because he was the chief of the apostles and he was to be thoroughly informed about these important questions. For the same reason Cornelius was directed to Peter. Without consulting the other apostles upon this important question, Peter received the first gentiles into the Church upon his own responsibility, showing thereby that he was conscious of his position as head of the apostles. 3. *The Virtues of Cornelius.* This eminent Gentile owed his conversion to Christianity, without doubt, to his glorious virtues. Cornelius was: (a) God-fearing (he observed the commandments of God) and pious (he prayed constantly), (b) benevolent (he gave much alms), (c) obedient (as he immediately complied with the angel's directions in sending for Peter), (d) humble (as he, a prominent Roman, allowed himself to be instructed by the plain, simple fisherman that Peter formerly was), (e) believing (when Peter preached in his house he accepted the word of God with faith and joyfulness, and let himself be baptized).

E. *Moral Application.*—Practise faithfully the virtues that Cornelius possessed. Perhaps you have been lukewarm and slothful in prayer, and have not observed the commandments well. Make a change in this, that you are more zealous hereafter. Contrition. Resolution.

XCVIII.—PETER IN PRISON.

A. *Preparation.*—The time of peace was soon over for the Church. Herod Agrippa, a grandson of the cruel Herod, who slew the infants, persecuted the Church. He caused James, the brother of John, to be executed, and had Peter taken prisoner. I will now tell you how Peter was cast into prison and miraculously set free, and how Herod was terribly punished.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Death of James. Peter in prison. (b) Mi-

raculous deliverance of Peter. (c) Peter in the house of Mark. (d) Terrible end of Herod.

C. Explanation.—(a) About this time, Paul and Barnabas were active in Antioch. "And when Herod would have brought him forth," in order to sentence him. "But prayer was made without ceasing," in order that God might deliver him. (b) "Peter was bound with two chains," meaning each of his hands was chained to those of the soldiers. "Gird thyself"; put on your overgarment and your sandals. "And he knew not that it was true," whether he was really free or was only dreaming of it. "Peter came to himself," meaning to a clear knowledge that he was really free and not dreaming. "He had been delivered from the expectation of the Jews." That means from the punishment which the Jews expected to visit on him. (c) "Mark," later on a companion of Peter, under whose directions he wrote the Gospel. "And the damsel came to hearken who was there." "It is his angel," they said, meaning his guardian angel. "And he went into another place," namely, to Rome. (d) "Cæsarea," Palestine. Herod made an oration to ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon. Forthwith he was struck by an angel, because he had taken delight in their flattery. "But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied." That is to say, the Church was ever more widely propagated.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Church is under Divine Protection.* Wicked Herod persecuted the Church of Jesus. His animosity was specially directed against her leaders: James the greater died a martyr's death and he had Peter, too, apprehended, hoping to destroy the Church by depriving her of her chief head. Peter was to be put to death after the Easter festival. But "man proposes and God disposes." God protected His Church. In a miraculous way Peter was set free by an angel on the very night in which he was to have been beheaded. As a result of this miracle many Jews were converted to Christianity. Thus does God protect His Church even to our days. He is with her always, until the end of the world. 2. *Fruit of Prayer.* When Peter was thrown into prison, the Christians at Jerusalem communicated this sad news to all the other communities. The whole Church joined in fervent prayer for his deliverance. And that which Christ had once promised them was fulfilled, namely: "If two of you shall agree upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven." This storm of common prayers did not remain unheard. Peter was delivered by an angel, and the Church regained her beloved leader. What are the chief fruits of prayer? 3. *Being Accessory to the Sins of Others.* The Jewish people saw

with pleasure the unjust persecution of the Church, and thus rejoiced in Herod's sin. How were the Jews guilty of being accessory to another's sin?

E. Moral Application.—Have you ever praised others when they sinned—lied, for instance? By so doing you have been guilty, in the sight of God, of the same sin. Contrition. Resolution.

XCIX.—PAUL AND BARNABAS TRAVEL TO PAGAN COUNTRIES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

A. Preparation.—In order to propagate the Church of Jesus, Paul and Barnabas undertook a long journey (A. D. 45-48) to distant countries where heathen peoples dwelt. I will now tell you about this journey.

B. Narration.—(a) Consecration of Paul and Barnabas. (b) Paul and Barnabas at Cyprus; the proconsul and the magician. (c) At Antioch, in Pisidia (Asia Minor). (d) At Lystra. (e) Return journey.

C. Explanation.—(a) "Superiors," bishops and priests. "Separate Paul and Barnabas as for the work to which I have taken them," from the other faithful by consecrating them as bishops. "The work," the announcing of the Gospel to the heathen. (b) "Cyprus," in the Mediterranean Sea, west of Syrian Antioch. A proconsul named Sergius Paulus, a Roman. "Magician" (see O. T., XXXIII.). (c) "An adherent of the Jews (cf. XCIV.), the Treasurer of Ethiopia." "The whole city almost came together," Jews and Gentiles. Then the Jews were filled with envy because the Gentiles, too, had assembled. "To you it behooved us to speak first the word of God," according to the Lord's will. "But they (Paul and Barnabas) shaking off the dust of their feet against them," etc. (cf. XXXII.). "Iconium," east of Pisidia. (d) "The priests of Jupiter wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas because they regarded them as gods." "The apostles rent their clothing" in anguish at this blindness. "We want to convert you from these vain things"—offering sacrifices to the gods or to idols. Paul was stoned nearly to death, but the next day "he rose up" in perfect health. (e) Antioch, in Syria. They tell the assembled Christians of the great things they have done for God, and how they have opened the door of faith to the Gentiles; that is to say, gained admittance for them into the Church by Baptism.

D. Commentary.—I. *Consecration of Bishops and Priests.* After working zealously in the community of Antioch at God's command, Paul was commissioned to preach the Gospel in heathen countries. Before starting on the journey, with his companion Barnabas, he re-

ceived ordination as bishop, through the laying on of hands and prayer from the superiors, who, in their turn, had been ordained bishops by the apostles. On his return journey Paul ordained, in Christian communities where he had preached or baptized, some of the faithful, who were found worthy, to the priesthood as bishops (superiors) and priests. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders? Who can validly administer the Sacrament of Holy Orders? 2. *Sins against the Faith.* In this story opportunities are offered us of becoming acquainted with various sins against the faith. (a) Unbelief and discourses against the faith. When Paul was teaching in the synagogue at Antioch (in Pisidia), the Jews contradicted him, and blasphemed by saying that Jesus was not the Son of God. From their envy of the Gentiles they remained unbelievers. How may we sin against faith? (b) Idolatry. The inhabitants of Lystra, in Iconium, were guilty of this by bringing forth oxen, to sacrifice them to Paul and Barnabas, and render to them divine honors. When do we sin by idolatry? (c) Witchcraft. This sin was committed by the Jewish magician who, with the help of Satan, performed wonderful things in order to prevent the proconsul from embracing the true faith. When do we sin by witchcraft? When do we sin against the worship due to God? 3. *St. Paul's Virtues.* (a) His zeal for God's honor. His entire missionary journey gives proof of this. Paul was burning with desire to spread the true faith. When do we worship God fervently? (b) His patience, with which he endured the exertions of the journey as well as the sufferings inflicted on him by his enemies. (c) His fortitude. Although threatened with death by his enemies, Paul did not desist from preaching the Gospel. (d) His humility. He related at Antioch "what great things God had done through them"; he ascribed all good to God, not to himself.

E. *Moral Application.*—Do you like to tell others what good you have done? This would be a sign of sinful pride. Cherish humility. Think little of yourself; ascribe all good to God. God loves the humble soul.

C.—THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM (ABOUT A. D. 50).

A. *Preparation.*—The reception of Gentiles into the Church had led many Christians, who had formerly been Jews, into error, imagining that the Gentiles must, before accepting the Christian faith, first become Jews if they

would be saved. To decide this discussion the apostles met at Jerusalem. We shall hear about this in the following story.

B. Narration.—(a) The dispute at Antioch. (b) The Church council. (c) Resolution of the same.

C. Explanation.—(a) Some coming down from Judea taught the brethren of the community who had formerly been Gentiles that they must obey everything in the law of Moses—circumcision, the prohibition of certain foods and various purifications. (b) "Elders," bishops and priests who had been ordained by the apostles. "Peter," who had come from Rome. He told them what had taken place shortly before, while sojourning at Joppe; of Cornelius and his relations. "Now therefore, why tempt you God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples," meaning so many laws and precepts. "We believe to be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, not, however, by circumcision." Paul and Barnabas related what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them, "so as to prove that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile." (c) "After these words," especially Peter's.

D. Commentary.—1. *The Church Assembly or Council.* The first Church council at Jerusalem has been a pattern for all the others. The occasion for the same was a debatable question (which?). In the following centuries, likewise, councils were held as often as decisions had to be pronounced upon points in dispute, or upon false doctrines (heresies). The apostles, bishops and priests were members of the first council, but only the apostles and bishops led the proceedings. In the later councils, therefore, only bishops had the right to counsel and vote. Simple priests could not take part in the decisions. The council at Jerusalem was presided over by Peter as head of the Church, not by James the lesser, the bishop of Jerusalem. In all succeeding councils the Pope presided, or was represented by a special envoy (legate). The work of that first council was by no means the formulation of new doctrines of faith, but the explanation of *existing* doctrines, decisions on disputed questions, just as, thereafter, councils never introduced new articles of faith, but explained only the faith taught by Christ, and defended it against heresies. The decision of such councils is infallible, because the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth," guides and rules in them the teaching office of the Church. "It has pleased the Holy Ghost, and us," etc. What must we do if a discussion arises in matters of faith? 2. *Peter's Supremacy.* Although the council met at Jerusalem, it was not conducted by James, the bishop of that

city, but by Peter, who had hastened there from Rome. When he spoke "the whole multitude was silent," as we are told in the Acts of the Apostles. And after Peter had decided in favor of the Gentile Christians, no one ventured to further dispute it. Hence we perceive that (a) Peter considered himself the chief of the apostles and exercised this office; (b) that the other apostles acknowledged him as their head.

E. *Moral Application*.—Be grateful to God that you are children of the Catholic Church, which alone possesses and teaches the true faith. Live according to this faith; confess it cheerfully and publicly before everybody when necessary.

CI.—FURTHER ACTIVITY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH.

A. *Preparation*.—In order to further spread the Christian faith, Paul undertook a second journey, two years after the Church council at Jerusalem (A. D. 51-53) and soon afterward a third one A. D. 53-58), after which the apostle was confined in prison, two years in Caesarea and two years in Rome. The following story will treat of this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Further activity of the apostle Paul. (b) New communities of Christians arise. (c) Paul in Greece. (d) His preaching at Athens. (e) Imprisonment, renewed journey and death of the apostle.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "Riches of Christ," meaning the graces of Christianity. "Luke," a Grecian physician who wrote the gospel named after him, and the Acts of the Apostles, under instructions from St. Paul. "Timothy," later bishop of Ephesus. "Titus," subsequently bishop of Crète (Candia). (b) "Macedonia," the Turkey of to-day. "Sweat cloths," handkerchiefs. (c) "Chief square of the city," called Areopagus. (d) "To the unknown God." The well informed among the Gentiles, therefore, surmised that there must be another God besides their gods (idols). "What therefore you worship (upon that altar) without knowing it, this I preach to you," namely, that unknown God. As some also of your poets said: "For we are also his offspring" (his race). Now, if this is so, it is impossible that God should resemble gold or silver or stone, out of which human art and device has made those inanimate idols, which stand far below man because they possess neither feeling nor life. "And God, indeed, having overlooked the times," having been forbearing, "declareth to men, that all should everywhere do penance," and be converted to the true God. (e) "I have labored more than all" (all the apostles) "for the kingdom of God."

D. *Commentary*.—1. *Veneration of Relics*. By the application of Paul's kerchief and girdle many sick were cured and those possessed delivered from evil spirits (cf. O. T., LXX., and N. T., XXXI.). Why do we venerate the relics, or remains, of the saints?

2. *The Preaching of Paul at Athens*. This may be divided into three parts: (a) The first part treats of God. He is the creator of heaven and earth. "God, who made the world . . . the Lord of heaven and earth." "And hath made of one, all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth." Why is God called "the creator of heaven and earth?" He is the infinitely perfect Spirit "not dwelling in temples," . . . "nor is he served by the hands of men, as though he needed anything." Why do we say that God is infinitely perfect? "Although he be not far, . . . for in him we live," etc. What do you mean by saying "God is omnipresent"? God has been forbearing with the ignorance of the Gentiles and with their hideous idol worship, but now he calls them to penance. What do you mean by saying "God is long-suffering"? (b) The second part treats of the origin, being and end of man. Man springs from God, who "hath made of one all mankind." Man is the offspring of God; therefore a being like unto God, the image of God. How did God distinguish man at his creation? Whereby was the first man an image of God. In what does the natural likeness of God consist? The end of man consists in this, that "he seeks Him" (God); that means knows Him, serves Him, loves Him. For what purpose are we on earth? (c) In the third part the apostle speaks of Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead, and through this miracle rendered Himself "worthy of belief," so that we must all believe what He has taught. This Christ is the Judge of all mankind. (Fifth and seventh articles of the creed.)

E. *Moral Application*.—God is always near you. Beware, therefore, of thinking, saying or doing anything that would be displeasing to God's sanctity!

CII.—ACTIVITY AND DEATH OF THE OTHER APOSTLES. ORIGIN OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

A. *Preparation*.—Like Peter and Paul, the other apostles were also untiring in their activity for the spreading of the faith. With the exception of one (John), they all died a martyr's death. The writings which they left behind them were collected; they form the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. The following story will treat of this.

B. *Narration*.—(a) Activity of the apostles. (b) Their death. (c) *Origin* of the Holy Scriptures.

C. *Explanation*.—(a) "With Peter"—just like Peter. Testimony for the name of Jesus Christ, by their preaching that He was the divine Redeemer. The Lord's command (cf. LXXXVI.). "Borders of the earth," all the countries then known. (b) Peter went to Rome (XCVIII.). He betook himself to Rome, because at that time it was the capital city of the world. "Nero" (A. D. 54-68). He would not be crucified like Our Lord because, in his humility, he did not consider himself worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord and Master. "Domitian" (A. D. 81-96). All other apostles testified with their blood. They died, therefore, the martyr's death: Andrew, Philip and Simon were crucified, James was hurled from the pinnacle of the Temple, Bartholomew was skinned alive, Thomas pierced by lances, Thaddens beaten to death with clubs, Matthew was burned alive, Matthias stoned and beheaded. (c) The Holy Scriptures were written by their disciples: Mark was Peter's and Luke was Paul's disciple. "Return"—at the last day.

D. *Commentary*.—1. *The Miraculous Propagation and Preservation of the Church*. What the Saviour once prophesied (in the parable of the mustard seed), namely, that his Church would spread over the whole earth, has been actually fulfilled. Crowned with success, aided by innumerable miracles, the apostles preached, founded Christian communities and spread the Church of Jesus, in an incredibly short time, over the earth. When the apostles died there were Christians in all countries known at that time. Still more wonderful than the spreading of the Church is the preservation of the same. Jews and Gentiles were filled with intense hatred against the doctrine of the Cross. The former considered the cross as a scandal, the latter as foolishness. For this reason they raged with the same fury against the messengers of the faith as they before had raged against Christ. Jesus' promises, "Behold I send you as lambs among wolves," and "As they have persecuted me, so also will they persecute you," were literally fulfilled. With one exception, all the apostles crowned their work with a martyr's death. The Church, however, could not be destroyed; against her "the gates of hell shall not prevail." For she is a divine work, as Gamaliel rightly suggested when he said to the high council: "Let these men alone. If their work is of men, it will fall to nothing; but if it be of God, you are not able to destroy it." The miraculous spreading and preservation of the Church, therefore, is an undisputable proof for the divinity of her founder. 2. *Holy Writ and Verbal*

Tradition. Some of the apostles, or their disciples, compiled writings, composed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and later gathered into one book, called the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. What is Holy Writ? Only a part of the divine revelations has been set down in Holy Writ. Most of the apostles propagated verbally the revelations imparted to them by Christ. For this reason it is not proper to regard the Holy Scriptures, which are not complete (cf. LXXXVI.), as the only source of the faith; we require also verbal tradition. Does it suffice if we believe only what is written in the Scriptures? What is understood by tradition? 3. *The Feast of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul is celebrated on June 29.*

E. *Moral Application.*—Thank God fervently for the great grace of being children of the Catholic Church.

CIII.—CONCLUSION.

A. *Preparation.*—After the apostles' death, the Church continued to spread. She stands immovable upon the rock of Peter as a firm, well-appointed edifice, and will so stand until the end of the world. Our last story treats of this.

B. *Narration.*—(a) Further extension of the Church and interior arrangement of the same. (b) Her endurance. (c) The great good fortune to be a child of this Church.

C. *Explanation.*—(a) "Departure"—death. The Church is enlightened by the Holy Ghost. "Messengers of faith"—missionaries. By preaching the Gospel in far countries they rescue the pagans from the "darkness of unbelief" and from the "shadow of death"; that means from the eternal death toward which they are hastening if they do not receive the true faith. (c) "The living members of the Church"; those who are in the state of sanctifying grace. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, both will be renewed after the destruction of the world. "The tree of life." This tree of life in paradise, in heaven, is Jesus Christ; the fruit of this tree is the possession of God, everlasting salvation.

D. *Commentary.*—1. *The Miraculous Spreading and Preservation of the Church* (cf. CII.). 2. *Management of the Church.* The government of the Church is conducted by the successors of St. Peter, the Popes at Rome. Thus Peter lives on in his successors. Could the office of chief pastor of the Church have ceased with the death of Peter? Who was the visible head of the Church after

the death of Peter? The other apostles likewise propagated their threefold office (the teaching, priestly and pastoral office) by consecrating others as bishops, through the laying on of hands, appointed their successors therefore. Was this threefold office common to all the apostles, to continue its existence? Who are the successors of the apostles? Who assist the bishops in the administration of their office? From whom has the Church received this order? 3. *Marks of the True Church of Jesus.* How is *unity* and good order maintained throughout the whole Church? Why is the Roman Catholic Church manifestly *one*? The Church is *holy* (a) because she has for her founder the Son of God, through whose doctrine she would lead all men to sanctity. Why is the Roman Catholic Church manifestly *holy*? The Church is (b) *catholic* because she has spread throughout the whole globe, and has never ceased to exist. Why is the Roman Catholic Church manifestly *catholic* or *universal*? The Church is (c) *apostolic*, for her doctrine is the same which the apostles received from Christ; her superiors (Pope and bishops) are the legitimate successors of the apostles. Why is the Roman Catholic Church manifestly *apostolic*? 4. *Qualities of the Church of Jesus.* Christ founded his Church in order that through her all men might be led to salvation. And that she may be capable of this, He has bestowed upon her, besides His doctrine, also His means of grace and His authority. He has, above all, granted to her the assistance of the Holy Ghost, so that with His help she may preserve the divine doctrine unadulterated, rightly dispense the means of grace, and exercise her authority for the salvation of mankind. As at that time, so also to-day, "the bishops lead the Christian communities by the Holy Spirit." In consequence of this assistance of the Holy Ghost the Church is *infallible*, and the only salvation. Why is the teaching office of the Church called infallible? What gift does the teaching office of the Church possess? Why do we say that in the Catholic Church is the only salvation? What are our obligations toward the Catholic Church in order to be saved?

E. *Moral Application.*—You, too, as children of the Catholic Church, are called to dwell one day "with Christ and all the saints in the new heaven and upon the new earth," and to eat of the Tree of Life in the celestial paradise." Be obedient children of the Catholic Church, believe her teaching, observe her commandments, make frequent use of her means of grace!

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD FROM THE OUTPOURING OF
THE HOLY GHOST TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE
BIBLICAL HISTORY.

1. Brief account of the events of this period.
2. Activity of the apostle Peter.
3. Life-story and activity of the apostle Paul.
4. Founding, propagating and regulating of the Church.



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